

WALTER
MOSLEY: A NEW BLACK POWER

The Nation.

BETTY
FRIEDAN,
1921-2006
Katha
Pollitt

WHO KILLED
THE WEST
VIRGINIA
MINERS?
Erik Reece

DEMOCRATIC
ALARMS
IN PA
John Nichols

HOW
HIP-HOP
LOST ITS
SOUL
Greg Tate

ELIZABETH
CADY
STANTON'S
LONELY
CRUSADE
Martha
Nussbaum

FEB. 27, 2006
www.thenation.com

THE CARTOON

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BOMB

FREE SPEECH AND THE FUROR
IN THE MUSLIM WORLD
THE EDITORS • GARY YOUNGE

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LETTERS



R. O. BLECHMAN

Two recent Nation offerings have brought in huge amounts of mail: Elizabeth Holtzman's "The Impeachment of George W. Bush" [Jan. 30], about which mail continues to come in, and "The Torture Complex" [Dec. 26], our year-end special issue.

—The Editors

IMPEACHMENT IN THE AIR

Wyckoff, NJ

■ Re: "The Impeachment of George W. Bush": Bring it on!

RICHARD KEMMER

Mountain View, Calif.

■ I strongly support Elizabeth Holtzman's call for impeachment. I am only surprised that her list of offenses did not include the illegal detainment of American citizens. CHARLES PETRIE

Portland, Ore.

■ Elizabeth Holtzman nailed it, with this exception: The most egregious example of George W. Bush's "reckless indifference to his obligation to execute the laws faithfully" is his "signing statements," by which he usurps the power of the judicial branch (by pretending to "construe" the law) and the legislative branch (by asserting the inherent power to disregard statutes like FISA—which expressly limit executive action).

D. LAWRENCE OLSTAD

Miami Beach, Fla.

■ At last, a *Nation* cover that cheers me up! But Elizabeth Holtzman leaves out one crucial point: Yes, the nation felt relieved when Nixon stepped down, but we were then left with President Ford, an altogether decent guy. If Bush leaves office, we get... President Cheney. If he serves less than two years of an unfinished term, he can run for election twice. New battle cry: "Impeach Cheney First!" CAROLYN KLEPSE

Tallahassee, Fla.

■ Forget Impeachment! You don't really want Darth Vader Cheney in the White House or Dr. Stangelove Rumsfeld. I am an old FDR Democrat who voted for W in 2000 because the Clintons had pushed liberalism into libertinism. However, these resurgent Republicans can win elections, but they cannot govern. Look at W's folly in Iraq and his tax cuts for the Haves and Have Mores, which are putting us in hock big time to China and foreign banks. This is not healthy for our beloved country.

JOHN RIPANDELLI

World War II Vet, Patton's 3rd Army

Philadelphia

■ Elizabeth Holtzman's article is thorough, compelling and so glaringly truthful and fact-filled that it makes me wonder if most of

America is asleep. Can the ultra-conservatives be so obsessed with turning America backward with a stacked judiciary, Congress and executive that they turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the criminal abuses of their leadership?

JUDY HASDAY

Evanston, Ill.

■ Elizabeth Holtzman deserves applause for pointing out that the Constitution makes the President the Commander in Chief only of the armed services, a distinction that I almost never hear made, even by lawyers and lawmakers. (As a US historian, such ignorance drives me nuts.) There is no such thing as a Commander in Chief of the American people, and the obligation to protect them is shared by all branches of government.

BERNARD A. WEISBERGER

West Greenwich, RI

■ Former Marine officer Carl Sheeler is running as a Democrat for the US Senate. We have put up a billboard south of Providence calling for the impeachment of George W. Bush (see www.carlsheeler.com).

SARA SHEELER

Freedom, Ind.

■ I was a 2004 GOP candidate for Congress and a true conservative. But I have signed a petition to impeach Bush (see www.thefreedomfarm.com). Liberty or bust!

ANDREW HORNING

Plattsburgh, NY

■ On February 2 Plattsburgh city councilors took up a resolution calling for the impeachment of George W. Bush. The issue brought an unusually large crowd to City Hall, and many people spoke. The councilors finally voted 3 to 2 against the resolution.

BRUCE BOYLE

'WE DO NOT TORTURE?'

Washington, DC

■ As someone who has been associated with survivors of torture for the past eight years, I thank you for the valuable exploration of torture in your special issue "The Torture Complex." If our nation is to merit some sort of reputation for basic human decency, we must do something we have failed to do in the past—we must demand that impunity be brought to an end. Our leaders—including Rumsfeld, Cheney and Bush himself—must be investigated and, if warranted (as I expect it would be), prosecuted for the torture they have ordered. (Indeed, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton could well be added to the list.) Congress seems determined to avoid any serious investigation, and action from an Attorney General would require the appointment of someone of moral integrity. Thus, the threat

of prosecution must follow these people after they leave office. We must also do whatever we can to assure that other governments will arrest all those involved in torture if they set foot on their soil. It is my hope to see the day when those mentioned above, war criminals in my estimation, are sent to prison and we finally begin to live by the words George W. Bush spoke so hypocritically: "We do not torture."

HAROLD NELSON

Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC)

www.tassc.org

Columbus, Ohio

■ Thank you for the special issue on torture. It ruined my day, as well it should have, and gave me new information. I can only hope that it will bring many other Americans to confront the horrors that are being carried out in their name and to demand an end to them and a full accounting from those who carry out, condone, plan or justify torture.

LINDA SLEFFEL

Alto, NM

■ America is not indifferent to what is being done in our name, as any poll worth its salt shows. However, our government, from the Supreme Court on down, is no longer accountable to us. We are ruled by a military-industrial greed machine. Those waging war enjoy it. It fills their pockets, and it's a lot more fun than Xbox. Short of mass armed revolution, there is little the morally outraged can do. We are not represented in Congress. Those who pretend that killing is not murder, unless it's the death of an embryo or a brain-dead woman, aren't the ones pulling the triggers—they are the ones reaping the dollars.

SUSAN YABUMOTO

Glendale, Calif.

■ The answer to the question "Why do human beings torture other human beings?" is simple. They enjoy it. No law, no summit meeting, no Congressional bill, no international agreement will ever change this basic fact.

MARIE CAIN

Bakersfield, Calif.

■ If a person is known by the company he keeps, Bush, Cheney et al. are members of a pretty distinguished group that includes Attila the Hun, Clovis I, Genghis Khan, Ivan the Terrible, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. What's really scary is that more than a few Americans think that's OK.

FORREST G. WOOD

Columbus, Ohio

■ While the silence of the American Medical Association on the subject of physician participation in torture is shocking, it is hardly sur-

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EDITORIALS

The Cartoon Bomb

Over the past few weeks, Europe and the Muslim world have faced increasing protests, marked in parts of the Arab world by arson, death threats and the killing of demonstrators. The catalyst is not Americans torturing detainees in an Iraqi prison, or an Israeli assault on a Palestinian town, or Western threats against Iran over its nuclear program. It is a series of cartoons, including images of the Prophet Muhammad, published in a Danish newspaper. But it is no laughing matter.

The crisis began simmering after the cartoons were published on September 30 by the right-wing daily *Jyllands-Posten*. Even leaving aside the Islamic stricture against visual representations of the Prophet, it is not surprising that the cartoons offended Denmark's Muslim minority—not to mention many Danes who respect their Muslim neighbors. In one cartoon Muhammad's turban is a bomb; in another a turbaned figure in heaven implores a group of suicide bombers to stop because "we ran out of virgins!" Muslim clerics in Copenhagen denounced the cartoons in their sermons, demonstrations were organized to demand an apology and ambassadors from Muslim countries requested meetings with officials. Denmark's prime minister defended the paper's right to publish the cartoons on free-speech grounds and refused to meet with Danish Muslims or Muslim ambassadors.

By late January Danish embassies throughout the Middle East were attracting angry crowds. In a show of solidarity with *Jyllands-Posten*, newspapers throughout Europe ran the cartoons, detonating even more furious reactions, from rioting and arson in

Beirut and Kabul to an Iranian newspaper's Holocaust cartoon contest. What had begun as a local affair had developed into a seeming showdown between Europe (portrayed as either liberal and tolerant or anti-Muslim and neocolonialist) and Islam (portrayed as either victimized and proud or backward and repressive)—a cardboard "clash of civilizations" deeply gratifying to the right-wing Europeans and radical Islamists who had fanned the flames of Copenhagen.

It mattered little that the attacks were roundly condemned by moderate Muslims like scholar Tariq Ramadan, who, writing in the *Guardian*, deplored the recklessness of governments that seized upon the cartoons to "bolster their Islamic legitimacy in the eyes of the public," or that liberal European journalists like Neal Ascherson pilloried *Jyllands-Posten* for inflaming Muslim sensitivities. Thanks to an unholy convergence of actions by a right-wing newspaper and radical Muslims—helped along by a cynical prime minister and European newspapers that misleadingly treated the matter as simply a contest over free speech—the Danish cartoon scandal has exploded into an international crisis.

There is, to be sure, no moral equivalence between the attacks on Danish embassies and the publication (or republication) of a cartoon, however offensive. Cartoons specialize in overstatement, but while they may give—intend to give—offense, they cause no casualties. It is, moreover, contradictory to condemn anti-Muslim bigotry while publishing anti-Semitic calumnies like the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (regularly featured in the Arabic media).

This magazine has historically been committed to freedom of speech, an essential principle that democratic societies have established over years of struggle, and we remain vigilant in its

EDITORIALS

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defense. Given attacks over the years from within our own constituency on cartoons by such esteemed *Nation* artists as Edward Sorel, David Levine and Robert Grossman, we at *The Nation* know as well as anyone their power to inflame emotions. Defending free speech means defending the rights of those with whom we disagree most profoundly, whether they are cartoonists who would have us believe that Muhammad is the forefather of today's suicide bombers, marchers who argue that "blasphemy" is not covered by freedom of speech or Holocaust revisionists on trial in Europe, where some speech is not protected.

The cartoon scandal is about much more than freedom of speech. At its heart the controversy is about power—the power of images; the power that divides Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans, the West and the Middle East; the power of radical Islamists to silence more moderate voices—and the responsibility that comes with power. In today's volatile political climate—charged by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, by Israel's construction of the "separation wall" in Palestine, by the controversy over the hijab and the revolt in the French *banlieues*, by the growth of anti-immigration politics and radical Islam in "liberal" Europe and by the velocity with which news and rumor travel on the Internet—the point is not *Jyllands-Posten's* right to publish but its editorial wisdom, its sense of civic responsibility.

But whether or not the publishing of the cartoons was a reckless provocation, and whether or not the violent response was manipulated by Islamists, we must come to terms with the conditions that created the tinderbox. Cartoons embody larger political and social issues. As Gary Younge notes below, discrimination against Muslims is an objective fact: Racially motivated crimes in Denmark have recently doubled. After the cartoon crisis has passed, that truth will remain.

COMMENT

The Right to Be Offended

In April 2003 Danish illustrator Christoffer Zieler submitted a series of unsolicited cartoons offering a lighthearted take on the resurrection of Christ to the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. Zieler received an e-mail from the paper's Sunday editor, Jens Kaiser, saying: "I don't think *Jyllands-Posten's* readers will enjoy the drawings. As a matter of fact, I think they will provoke an outcry. Therefore I will not use them." Two years later the same paper published twelve cartoons of Muhammad, including one with him wearing a turban shaped like a bomb with a burning fuse. Predictably enough, it created an outcry. How we got from there to talk of "the Muslim threat" to the immutable European traditions of secularism and freedom of speech, while Scandinavian embassies burn in the Arab world, is illuminating.

Four months after the cartoons were published, *Jyllands-Posten's* editor apologized. In the intervening time Muslims engaged in mostly peaceful protests. Several Arab and Muslim nations withdrew their ambassadors from Denmark while demonstrators picketed embassies. According to Denmark's consul in

COMMENT

Dubai, a boycott of Danish products in the Gulf would cost the country \$27 million in sales.

All of this went largely unnoticed in the West, apart from critics who characterized the protests as evidence of a “clash of civilizations.” In their attempt to limit free speech, went the argument, the demonstrators proved that Islam and Western democracy were incompatible.

Even on its own terms this logic is disingenuous. The right to offend must come with at least one consequent right and one subsequent responsibility. People must have the right to be offended, and those bold enough to knowingly cause offense should be bold enough to weather the consequences, so long as the aggrieved respond within the law. Muslims were in effect being vilified twice—once through the original cartoons and then again for having the gall to protest them. Such logic recalls the words of the late South African black nationalist Steve Biko: “Not only are whites kicking us; they are telling us how to react to being kicked.”

Nonetheless, the “clash of civilizations” rhetoric framed the discussion for the almost inevitable violence to come. For as criticism mounted, other European newspapers decided to reprint the cartoons in solidarity with *Jyllands-Posten*. This was clearly inflammatory. Now the flames have reached all the way to the Middle East, where Danish and Norwegian embassies have been burned down. And the violence has been characterized as evidence that Muslims are plain uncivilized.

There seems to be almost universal agreement that these cartoons are offensive. There should also be universal agreement that the paper has a right to publish them without fear of violent reprisal. When it comes to freedom of speech, the liberal/left should not sacrifice its values one inch to those who seek censorship on religious grounds. But the right to freedom of speech equates to neither an obligation to offend nor a duty to be insensitive. If our commitment to free speech is important, our belief in antiracism should be no less so. Neither the cartoons nor the violence has emerged from a vacuum. They are steeped in and have contributed to an increasingly recriminatory atmosphere shaped by, among other things, war, intolerance and historic injustices. According to the Danish Institute for Human Rights, racially motivated crimes doubled in Denmark between 2004 and '05. These cartoons only served to compound Muslims' sense of alienation and vulnerability. The *Jerusalem Post* has now published the cartoons. Iranian newspaper *Hamshari* is calling for illustrators to ridicule the Holocaust. The race to the gutter is on.

The acts of violence, including death threats to *Jyllands-Posten*'s editor, should be condemned. The fact remains, however, that the overwhelming swath of protests, particularly in Europe, where crass banners and suicide-bomber attire were the worst offenses, have so far been peaceful. But those who see this episode as freighted with weightier cultural meanings have another agenda. “This is a far bigger story than just the question of twelve cartoons in a small Danish newspaper,” Flemming Rose, *Jyllands-Posten*'s culture editor, told the *New York Times*. Too right, but it is not the story Rose thinks it is. Rose claims that “this is about the question of integration and how compatible is the religion of Islam with a modern secular society.” In the mistaken belief that Europe is a monoethnic continent to which nonwhite

people have just arrived, Rose is not alone in refracting every protest by a minority through a racial, ethnic or religious lens.

In so doing he displays his ignorance of both modern secular society and the role of all religions within it. Without anything as explicit as a First Amendment, Europe's freedom of speech laws are far more piecemeal than those of the United States. Many were adopted as a result of the Holocaust—the most potent reminder of just how fragile and recent this liberal secular tradition truly is in Europe. Last year the French daily *Le Monde* was found guilty of “racist defamation” against Israel and the Jewish people. Madonna's book *Sex* was only unbanned in Ireland in 2004. Even as this debate rages, David Irving sits in jail in Austria charged with Holocaust denial over a speech he made seventeen years ago, Islamist cleric Abu Hamza has been convicted in London for incitement to murder and racial hatred and Louis Farrakhan remains banned from Britain because his arrival “would not be conducive to the public good.” Even here in America school boards routinely ban the works of authors like Alice Walker and J.K. Rowling. Such actions should be opposed; but no one claims Protestant, Catholic or Jewish values are incompatible with democracy.

Which brings us back to Zieler. We will never know what the response to his Christ cartoons would have been because they were never published. (The paper's announced plan to reprint some cartoons about Christ fails to mitigate its double standard.) That fact alone shows that the question has never been whether you draw a line under what is or isn't acceptable to publish, but where you draw it. There is nothing courageous about using your freedom of speech to ridicule the beliefs of one of the weakest sections of your society. But Rose and others like him clearly believe Muslims, by virtue of their religion, exist on the wrong side of the line. That exclusion finds its reflection in the Islamist rejection of all things Western. And so the secularists and anti-racists in both the West and the Middle East find their space for maneuver limited, while dogma masquerades as principle, and Islamists and Islamophobes are confirmed in their own vile prejudices.

GARY YOUNGE

Gary Younge, the Alfred Knobler Journalism Fellow at The Nation Institute, is the New York correspondent for the Guardian.

Who Killed the Miners?

Now that the last prayers have been offered up for sixteen men who lost their lives last month in West Virginia mines, I think it's time we get down to the hard work of taking responsibility for their deaths. Because Appalachian coal is shipped across the country, almost anyone who uses electricity at home or work must acknowledge part of the responsibility. But some people bear more than others. It's time to name names.

I'll start close to home with my senator, Kentucky Republican Mitch McConnell. No other senator has so adamantly defended the right of corporations to donate unlimited amounts of money to election campaigns, all in the name of free speech. And because coal companies give 91 percent of that money to

COMMENT

Republicans, George W. Bush rewarded McConnell's efforts by naming his wife, Elaine Chao, as Labor Secretary in 2001. Within days of Bush's inauguration, Chao replaced Assistant Secretary of Labor Davitt McAteer, who oversaw the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), with Dave Lauriski, a man who had spent his professional life managing and lobbying for coal companies.

Several months before Lauriski's appointment, the largest-ever environmental disaster east of the Mississippi occurred when the bottom of a huge coal impoundment pond gave way, pouring 300 million gallons of toxic coal slurry into the town of Inez, Kentucky (where, incidentally, LBJ had stood on a miner's porch in 1964 to announce his War on Poverty). Jack Spadaro, superintendent of the National Mine Health and Safety Academy (which trains the health inspectors and support personnel at MSHA), discovered that Martin County Coal Corporation, the company mining above Inez, had been warned that the pond was unstable and would eventually break. But Martin had refused to comply with MSHA's recommendations to reinforce the pond's reservoir. Spadaro and a team of investigators recommended that Martin be cited for criminal negligence.

But there was one problem. Dave Lauriski was not Davitt McAteer. Lauriski (who during the investigation met repeatedly with Don Blankenship, CEO of Massey Energy, Martin's parent company) refused to go along with Spadaro's recommendation.

Consequently, Spadaro refused to sign the final report of MSHA's investigation. In retaliation, Lauriski had the lock on Spadaro's office door changed, then tried to have him fired on trumped-up charges. When that didn't work, he transferred Spadaro far from his West Virginia home to a Pittsburgh office.

Spadaro retired rather than accept the transfer, but Lauriski used the same tactic against other MSHA employees who had the temerity to do their job of protecting miners. On May 14, 2002, Lauriski met in his Washington office with Bob Murray, an influential coal operator, who complained that safety enforcement at his mines was too strict. Ellen Smith of *Mine Safety and Health News* reports that Murray had personally donated \$75,000 to Republican campaigns and that from 2000 to 2003 his political action committee contributed \$648,000—96 percent of it going to Republicans. Within days of Murray's meeting with Lauriski, two MSHA officials were transferred away from Murray's mines.

A few months later Murray told other MSHA officials that if enforcement didn't loosen up at his Powhatan Mine in Ohio—which had the worst safety record in Mine District 3—he would put district manager Tim Thompson “in his sights.” According to Ken Ward Jr. of the *Charleston Gazette*, Murray told the MSHA officials, “Mitch McConnell calls me one of the five finest men in America, and the last time I checked, he was sleeping with your boss.” Within months Thompson was transferred out of Murray's district, which was already operating at only 86 percent of federally required staffing levels. Two weeks after the transfer, in January 2003, an explosion at the district's McElroy Coal Company killed three miners.

Given all this transparent corruption, it's easy to understand why people like Martin County resident Mick McCoy have reached the conclusion that under the current Administration, “the watch dogs of the people have become the guard dogs of the coal industry.” Under Bush 100 safety officers have been cut from MSHA. Under Bush MSHA has issued fewer and smaller fines and collected less than half the money owed by violators.

When Lauriski left MSHA this past January, he left behind an agency weakened and demoralized. But to Lauriski's way of thinking, he had accomplished much. In 2003 he brazenly told the *Oklahoma City Journal Record*, “The industry has always been good to me.... I just hope that I've given back as much as I've received.” I'd like to hear him tell that to the families of the sixteen dead miners.

There are two ways to mine coal: You can strip it from the surface or dig it underground. Surface mining, especially mountaintop removal, which is leveling central Appalachia at a disconcerting pace, destroys forests and streams and leaves entire communities with toxic water, mudslides and flash flooding. Underground mining kills miners—quickly with explosions and roof collapses, slowly with black-lung disease. And yet Dick Cheney's new energy plan calls for millions of dollars in subsidies for this callous industry.

Which leads me back to responsibility. In an astonishing display of indifference, Richard Strickler, Bush's new appointee to head MSHA, told senators he saw no need for tougher safety laws. But West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin isn't waiting for the Feds to act. He has already begun overhauling safety regula-

CALVIN TRILLIN

GOVERNMENT'S THE PROBLEM

(A reprise of the Republican Sea Chantey, sung by the Bush Administration's famed All Thumbs Chorale)

Some seniors say they're baffled by
Our drug plan, and we won't deny
It's complicated. That's too bad,
But complications simply had
To be included in this plan:
We promised donors when we ran
That we'd enrich with every claim
Our pals in the insurance game.
If they don't get their cut, you see,
It's socialistic as can be—
Like Medicare, which we've surmised
Should certainly be privatized.

'Cause government's the problem, lads,
Americans would all do well to shun it.
Yes, government's the problem, lads.
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COMMENT

tions at the state level, calling for miners to carry greater oxygen supplies underground and for every mine to install tracking devices that would quickly locate miners in the event of a roof collapse or an explosion. Every governor in coal country should follow Manchin's lead.

If the Bush Administration won't assume any responsibility, individuals can. If everyone reading this replaced the five most frequently used lights in their homes with compact fluorescent bulbs, which use a quarter of the energy of regular bulbs, our country's consumption of coal would plunge overnight. And if on top of that, you bought an Energy Star-rated refrigerator, your consumption of coal-fired energy would drop almost by half, and so would your electric bill. And if we as communities demanded that our electric companies followed the 10/20/30 plan—provide us with 10 percent renewable energy by 2010, 20 percent by 2020, on out—we could finally stabilize the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, stop our global climate crisis and weaken some Gulf Coast hurricanes in the process.

To base an economy of infinite growth on a finite and deeply problematic source of energy is shortsighted and dangerous. It is time we called ourselves and our so-called leaders to account.

ERIK REECE

Erik Reece is the author of Lost Mountain: A Year in the Vanishing Wilderness, out this month from Riverhead.

Democratic Alarms in PA

In the day Senate Judiciary Committee Democrats unanimously rejected the Supreme Court nomination of Judge Samuel Alito, their anointed candidate for what is seen as the country's most vulnerable Republican-held Senate seat announced his support for the President's pick. Pennsylvania State Treasurer Robert Casey Jr., the man Democrats and liberal interest groups have lined up behind in his challenge to right-wing Republican Senator Rick Santorum, dismissed concerns about Alito that had been raised by the very senators and organizations he expects to help elect him in November. According to Casey, "The arguments against Judge Alito do not rise to the level that would require a vote denying him a seat on the US Supreme Court."

For activists like Kate Michelman, former president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, the move confirmed concerns about Casey. "As a Pennsylvanian, I am particularly appalled that local and national Democrats would hand our Senate nomination to someone who openly supports giving *Roe* an Alito-induced death," said Michelman. But Casey has always been antichoice. What worried even some Democrats who'd made their peace with Casey's abortion stance—on the basis of his behind-the-scenes assurances that he would not reflexively support antichoice nominees for the High Court—was the fact that Casey, supposedly a big backer of worker and consumer rights, so casually rejected serious arguments that had been raised about Alito's pro-corporate bias.

It's no secret that prominent Democrats—including Hillary Clinton, whose political action committee has donated \$10,000 to the Casey campaign—are backing a candidate critics call "Santo-

rum Lite" because they think Casey, whose father was governor and who's been elected three times statewide, is known and seemingly popular. He consistently leads Santorum in the polls, and if his lead holds through November, Democrats will be one seat closer to retaking the Senate. But Casey's lead has been dwindling as Santorum's camp takes shots at him from the right while pro-choice and pro-gay rights moderates and liberals grumble about the Democrat's conservative stances on social issues.

The Casey controversy illustrates the perils of early intervention by Washington Democrats in the process of selecting Senate candidates at the state level; in their drive to find a strong contender, DC power brokers often bet on candidates who are more conservative than the grassroots activists who form the party's base. It's especially frustrating to Pennsylvania activists, who watched national Democrats elbow out of the contest Barbara Hafer, a popular prochoice woman who'd won a number of statewide races, to make way for Casey. "A lot of women feel ignored, like the boys decided that this is a throwaway issue," Kathy Miller, outgoing president of the Pennsylvania chapter of the National Organization for Women, told the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

There is similar frustration in Tennessee, where another Senate candidate anointed by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, Congressman Harold Ford, came out against an anti-Alito filibuster on the day civil rights groups endorsed the last-ditch effort to block the nomination. Hilary Shelton, director of the NAACP's Washington bureau, described the move by Ford, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, as "deeply concerning to us." Ford's primary foe, State Senator Rosalind Kurita, hasn't made a big issue of Ford's stand. It's a different story in Pennsylvania, where Chuck Pennacchio, a college professor and former Congressional aide, has positioned himself as the progressive alternative to Casey on issues ranging from abortion rights to the Iraq War. Along with another candidate who's challenging Casey, attorney Alan Sandals, Pennacchio seized on Casey's defection to the Alito camp. "Democrats will have a choice between a watered-down version of Rick Santorum and a strong Democrat who will consistently stand with them on the issues they care about," argues Pennacchio. Recalling that his party lost when it ran a social conservative against Santorum in 2000, Pennacchio says: "An antichoice Democrat cannot beat an antichoice Republican in a high-profile race."

Pennacchio may be right. When a contender like Casey splits with the base, it raises worries about whether that candidate offers enough of an alternative to generate the high turnout needed from liberal partisans, let alone to attract the votes of those prochoice independents and Republicans whose defections could tip Pennsylvania and the Senate to the Democrats. A late-January Zogby poll actually showed that when voters are informed about Pennacchio and his positions, he beats Santorum by a slightly wider margin than would Casey. Unfortunately for Pennacchio, he's still struggling to get his message out. He trails far behind Casey in the primary polls and won't be getting any help from DC Democrats. But his grassroots campaign will be raising alarm bells between now and the May 16 primary, warning Democrats who care to listen that they run the risk of nominating a candidate who can't win in November.

JOHN NICHOLS

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

How Not to Spot a Terrorist

Paranoid America—by which I mean its governors—has long dreamed of foolproof technology to guard the Homeland from subversion, or penetration by alien hostiles.

In its latest variant the vaunted technology comes in the form of sweeps by the computers of the National Security Agency, programmed to intercept hundreds of millions of phone, e-mail and fax messages. These days as much as a third of global communications are on fiber-optic cable routes that pass through the United States.

The NSA's programmers claim that the artificial intelligence programs—terabytes of speech, text and image data—monitoring the filters are of such refinement that they can determine the sex, age and class of the communicators and, no doubt (though they take care not to boast of any such profiling), their genetic and linguistic ethnicity too. After all, Middle Easterners are surely a prime target.

A very useful story in the February 5 *Washington Post*, headlined "Surveillance Net Yields Few Subjects," cites "knowledgeable sources" as saying that about 5,000 Americans have had their conversations recorded or e-mails read without court authority. Of these, fewer than ten US citizens or residents a year "have aroused enough suspicion during warrantless eavesdropping to justify interception of their domestic calls, as well."

Such intercepts would require a warrant from a judge, with the request couched in terms of probable cause, usually defined as being a one-in-two chance of the suspicions being justified. So clearly a final cull of ten or so a year out of hundreds of thousands, or most likely tens of millions, means the "probable cause" standard was abandoned.

"Data mining" by artificial intelligence is a proceeding that is not only constitutionally illegal but a technological fantasy. The *Post* quotes Jeff Jonas, chief scientist at IBM Entity Analytics, as saying pattern-matching techniques that "look at people's behavior to predict terrorist intent are so far from reaching the level of accuracy that's necessary that I see them as nothing but civil liberty infringement engines."

Every era produces its techno-Panglosses, eager to guard America and demanding torrents of public money to that end. In Reagan's time it was the Strategic Defense Initiative, with missiles programmed to launch on warning that enemy warheads were plummeting into the Homeland. That spasm of military Keynesianism has thus far merely cost money. Back in the early part of the twentieth century the data miners and Star Wars fantasists had their equivalents in men of intellectual eminence who successfully agitated for filters to be installed at America's ports of entry to detect genetic terrorists, i.e., people of bloodstock deemed by the fearful eugenicists to be a threat to America's gene pool.

The US Immigration Act of 1924 sanctioned the use of the bogus US Army IQ scores of World War I (themselves promoted by eugenic racists) to "scientifically verify" the supposed heredi-



tary mental inferiority of Jews, Italians, Poles, Hungarians, Spaniards and other non-Anglo-Saxon Protestant racial and ethnic groups. The eugenicists even wanted to send inspectors to Europe to examine all would-be immigrants for genetic flaws. In the end, this task passed to one of the eugenicists' German admirers.

In his great 1975 tract *The Legacy of Malthus*, Allan Chase, narrating this shameful story, asks, How many of the 6,065,704 would-be immigrants excluded by racial quotas set by the eugenicists

survived the war? For sure, most of the Jews, Poles and Russians identified by the Nazis (using US eugenic "science") were rounded up and exterminated.

To the phrenologists and genetic data miners we can add the forensic fingerprinters. I've long believed that the "scientific certainty" of unique fingerprint matching is mostly theater, using suspect forensic work to bewitch judge and jury, as it has for more than 100 years. Fingerprinting, be it recalled, was first sold as a crime-fighting tool by Charles Darwin's cousin Ernest Galton, a fervent eugenicist.

In 2004 the FBI's top fingerprint analysts, subsequently buttressed by an outside "forensic expert," insisted that a print lifted from a bag at the scene of the Madrid terror bombing was "a 100 percent positive identification" with one of twenty sets of prints spat out by the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System, containing a database of some 47 million fingerprints. (To be fair to the IAFIS computer, it said "close non-match.")

The print thrown up by the FBI's computer belonged to the left index finger of Brandon Mayfield, a lawyer working in Beaverton, Oregon. A federal judge in Portland duly acknowledged probable cause in signing a warrant for surveillance of Mayfield. He was spied upon and arrested. All the while, the Spanish police were insisting there was no match between Mayfield's print and the one on the bag, which they determined belonged to the right middle finger of Ouhane Daoud, an Algerian national living in Spain, whom they duly arrested. Mayfield, who was nowhere near Spain when the bombs went off, went free.

The claims of scientific precision are as suspect today as they were a century ago, when men like Charles Davenport were laboring on their racist tracts and the sterilizers were mustering strength here in America. These days we have data mining, "100 percent certain" DNA hits, retinal ID, face-recognition systems. Elementary constitutional protections get swept aside. As the Democrats reviewed the NSA data mining, a prime concern was the potential liability of US phone carriers (who poured money into their campaign treasuries in 1996 to purchase telecommunications "reform"). They didn't question the very premises of the data mining. Is this strange? Not in a world where the *New York Times* can publish an article, as it did on February 8, about the Democrats' failure to gain popular traction, in which the difficult words "war" and "Iraq" barely intruded. ■

KATHA POLLITT

Betty Friedan, 1921–2006

Betty Friedan is dead at 85—a brilliant, pugnacious woman who lived a big life and wrote a big book, a book that helped change our world, in every way for the better. The far-right magazine *Human Events* knew what it was doing when it put *The Feminine Mystique* on its list of the Ten Most Harmful Books of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. It might not have been as profound as *The Second Sex* or as radical as the stream of articles and pamphlets that a few years later would pour from the mimeograph machines of the women's liberation movement. But for millions of American women it was as profound and as radical as it needed to be.

If you ever doubt how thoroughly dead the 1950s are, try teaching *The Feminine Mystique* to young women, as I did six years ago. You might as well be teaching Jane Austen. The way you'd have to explain about curates and Bath and entailed estates, you have to tell them how women dressed up to go to the market, how women's magazines obsessed about the fragile male ego and how dropping out of college to get married was indulgently viewed because you weren't going to use your education anyway. The vast American obliviousness that shrouds in a kind of Gothic mist everything that happened before last Tuesday has swallowed up the system of laws, social practices and cultural understandings Friedan described. My students felt a bit exasperated by Friedan's suburban wives, their low-level depression and seething dissatisfactions, their "problem that had no name." If they were so unhappy, why didn't they, you know, do something about it? None of my students planned to spend their days waxing the kitchen floor; even their mothers hadn't done that. But if they did, it would be—the magic word—their choice.

Well, maybe. Or maybe what looked like choice would be a new incarnation of the mystique in a hot new downtown outfit, wheeling a designer stroller. Or maybe the mystique is gone but the structural obstacles it obscured are still there: job discrimination, the old boys' network, workaholic job cultures, lack of childcare. After all, naming a problem is not the same as solving it. The Women's Strike for Equality, which Friedan helped organize in 1970, called for twenty-four-hour childcare centers, abortion on demand and equal opportunity in education and employment. Not one of those thirty-six-year-old demands has been fulfilled.

In a spirited, much discussed polemic in the December *American Prospect*, retired law professor Linda Hirshman argues that it's not a media myth that educated young women are going back home in droves; it's really happening, and it's feminists' fault for replacing the language of justice with the language of choice: Whatever you decide is fine, if that's what you really want! For Hirshman work is everything: She counts as slackers even new mothers who take a few years off or go part-time. And work means a high-paying career with a corner office in your sights: none of your poverty-wage, idealistic, do-good jobs for her, so eat your hearts out, *Nation* staffers. Hirshman wants feminists to



assert that stay-home mothers waste their talents, buy into domestic subordination and perpetuate inequality in the public realm. Even if she's right in some abstract, theoretical way, and even if there were some central committee of feminism to issue these fatwas, it would be hard to think of a better recipe for political suicide: As if American women don't already feel attacked by the cartoon feminist in their heads!

In *Salon's* roundup of tributes, Hirshman claims Friedan as her muse. But what strikes me about *The*

Feminine Mystique is the absence of one-size-fits-all pronouncements. In her political battles, Friedan may have been rigid and dogmatic—young feminists were "man-haters," lesbians were "the lavender menace." Her 1980 follow-up, *The Second Stage*, is marred by her obsessive hostility to the movement she helped create. But in her first book she spoke in a different voice: Rarely has a writer addressed readers more empathetically and more intimately. She doesn't say, Well, if you think you need to be home with your children, that just shows what a failure you are. Or, By washing your husband's shirts you perpetuate the subordination of women, you traitor. She says, If you feel there's more to life, you're right. You're not the problem, society is.

The Feminine Mystique didn't change my life; I was only 13 when it came out and even then I didn't see myself as a Future Homemaker of America. The book I loved was Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, which was about literature. Still, whenever I open Friedan's manifesto I'm carried away by its directness and pungency, its moral seriousness, its Emersonian call to women to use their best energies and be true to their best selves. It is so contrary to the caricature of feminism put forward in the media down to this day—child-hating feminazis in power suits—and it is not really Hirshman's feminism either. Friedan doesn't disparage love or motherhood (in fact, for women's liberationists, she was far too devoted to conventional domestic arrangements); she doesn't insist you get up from the delivery table and go straight back to your desk; she doesn't, like Hirshman, belittle majoring in English or art history as a ticket to nowhere. Still less did Friedan—whose major experience of full-time employment was as editor of the left-wing United Electrical Workers union newspaper—advise women to drop their foolish predilection for socially meaningful work and go for that big corporate paycheck. I doubt she would say, with Hirshman, that domesticity is inherently "not interesting" even if she thought it. She would simply say it is not enough for a whole human life. Cooking and cleaning and shopping are not why we are here.

The Feminine Mystique has a larger and deeper vision: Women, like men, have a duty to their minds and talents and selves that cannot be fulfilled by living vicariously through husbands and children. An equal cannot live a happy subordinate life; an adult cannot thrive in a culture that infantilizes her. If Rousseau had not been a mad misogynist, he would have applauded Friedan.

ARTICLES

A NEW BLACK POWER

WALTER MOSLEY

Most black Americans have been Democrats for at least the fifty-three years that I've been alive. What have the Democrats done for us in all that time? We have the lowest average income of any large racial group in the nation. We're incarcerated at an alarmingly high rate. We are still segregated and profiled, and have a very low representation at the top echelons of the Democratic Party. We are the stalwarts, the bulwark, the Old Faithful of the Democrats, and yet they have not made our issues a high priority in a very long time.

Why should we be second-class members in the most important political activities of our lives? Why shouldn't the party we belong to think that our problems are the most important in this land?

I'm not saying that we should become Republicans. The Republicans don't care about us either. But at least they don't pretend to be on our side. And you have to admit that, of late, the Bush Administration has put black faces into high-profile jobs that carry clout on the international playing field. I don't have to like Colin Powell or Condoleezza Rice to appreciate that once a black person has been put into a position of power, the second time around is much, much easier.

We are a racial minority in a country where racism is a fact of life, a country that was founded on economic and imperialist racism. Taking this into account and adding it to the fact that our issues are regularly put on a back burner, I believe that it

is not out of order to send out a call for the formation of an African-American interest group, or maybe a political unit, that

would bring our issues, and others, to the forefront of American political discourse.

If we had our own political voting bloc that paid attention to issues that reflect our needs in domestic and international affairs, things would change for us. The first thing is that many more of us would be likely to vote. Imagine the interest young people would have if they felt we were organizing based on our own interests: They could work for a candidate who represented their issues; they could run for office themselves.

And even though the party would be based on the racial identity that has been shoved down our throats since the first days we came here in chains, we wouldn't work only for ourselves. We'd argue about medical care and Social Security and the good jobs that are disappearing from this nation like fleas off a dead dog's back.

America's corporations, CEOs and portfolio managers don't have to worry about the euro and the devaluation of the dollar. They belong to an international

club. It doesn't matter where the most recent SUV is being produced; what matters is that my stockholders and I own a piece of the company that makes and sells those cars.

It takes many companies working in unison to make secure the wealth of American capitalism. Two of the major-interest corporations that facilitate the needs of our wealthiest citizens are the Republican and Democratic (so-called) political parties. They

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Sam Waterston is a longstanding *Nation* reader.

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exonerate their actions with numbers of votes, but the wheels they run on are greased by money, and lots of it.

If we took the vote into our own hands, we wouldn't have to ask the Democrats for their support—we could demand it. George W. Bush, or whoever takes his place, will send for our representatives to come to his home to discuss his plans. This is because they have not yet figured out how to dispose of the vote in the American political system.

Imagine it. We could actually democratize America by taking power away from the two-party system and handing it over to the people. Other special parties would arise splintering off from the centrist attendants of the rich once we show them the way.

What I'm talking about here is the beginning of an American Evolution, a movement that will create a series of political interest groups that will transform our two-party system into a kind of virtual parliament. We could construct smaller political groups based on specific interests. There could be Black Party Congress members from Watts, Harlem, the Motor City and a dozen other inner-city bastions. All we have to do is have a fair representation in the House of Representatives to have an extraordinary impact on the wheels of government.

Farmers, women, the aged, angry young white men and, for that matter, true Republicans might create their own small parties/interest groups. These groups would not only have direct representation in the House of Representatives but would also begin to make deals with those people running for senator and President, police chief and mayor.

It's past the time when we black Americans can complain about how we are treated without ourselves trying to take the reins of power. A Black Voting Bloc would be a bold move. Some might say a radical move—too radical. But a country that incarcerates people of color at an eight-to-one ratio to whites played the race card way before Johnnie Cochran. If we could come together and see a way to put balance back in the American political landscape, then we should do it.

Why?

Because if we do not lead we will be led. And if those who have learned to despise, distrust and diminish us are the leaders, then our path will lead even farther away from our homes. We will wake up like strangers in our own beds. We, and our children, will be walking in uncomfortable shoes to poor jobs. We will be jeered on every corner, and every mirror we come across will distort our image.

Just so that it doesn't seem that I'm giving short shrift to this argument, let me try to explain why this kind of "political party" will be different from its interest-corporation counterparts. First, this kind of group will be a political unit more than a party. This unit should be patterned after interest groups that form around specific necessities of our particular community. As I've mentioned before, I would like to see many of these units evolve, but for the moment let me address the Black Voting Bloc.

What we need for this group is a short list of demands that define our political aspirations at any given point. These demands might change over time, but at any given moment we should have no more than eight expectations of the candidates or legislation we vote for. I am not positioning myself as the leader or even as a central designer of this group, but let me put forward a list of possible demands that our unit might embrace:

(1) A commitment to revamping the legal system and the penal system to make sure that citizens of color are getting proper treatment and that all inmates are given the utmost chance to rehabilitate and re-establish themselves in society. (This rehabilitation will include suffrage for all ex-convicts who have served their sentences.)

(2) An expectation that there be equal distribution of all public wealth and services among the citizens, no matter their income, race or history.

(3) A demand that a true accounting for the impact of slavery be compiled by all government bodies in authority over records that give this information.

(4) A universal healthcare system.

(5) A retirement system that will assure older Americans the ability to spend their later years in relative comfort and security.

(6) A commitment to assemble a general history of our nation in both its glory and its shame.

(7)

(8)

I left 7 and 8 blank because I think you should fill these out. This is, after all, a communal effort meant to bring our intelligences together. And if you don't feel that you're an affiliate of the Black Voting Bloc, write your own demands and see what kind of group you might attract. I believe that any group concerned with the rights of Americans will have at least half of these demands in common.

One last comment on the idealistic part of this notion:

All black people don't have to join right off. If we can put together just 10 percent of the voting black population, we will be wielding a great deal of power. Others will join us if our political strategy works. In time we might tip the scales against the rich and the ultra-rich. If we do that we might very well make this a better world.

I know many of you will say that we don't have the time to allow the United States to evolve politically. Like many Americans, you believe that our nation faces urgent problems that must be solved by the next election; and the elections after that. My answer is, That is just what they want you to think. Our so-called political parties want you to believe that only they can save you when, really, they have no intention of doing so. The Democrats, the Republicans—they're in business for themselves in this vast religion of capitalism. They will never solve Americans' problems, not fully. We have to strive against the system, change it, make it reflect our inexpert visions of right and good. As long as you vote Democratic, as long as you vote Republican, you will be assuring that true democracy has no chance to exist. As long as we believe in the fearmongers' light show, the world will suffer under our misguided convictions.

Walter Mosley is the author, among many other books, of Life Out of Context, just published by Nation Books. This article is an excerpt.

There's no question that a Black Voting Bloc would be a fine context for us and for people of the black diaspora around the world. It would be a forum that would express perceptions from the underbelly of the American experience. That experience, I believe, would find resonance on an international scale and help to bring our maverick nation into concert with certain other countries that would like to get along with us.

But how do we get our people to feel strongly about political unity? What in our experience will bring us together? Should we turn to a charismatic leader to guide us safely through the minefield of fanaticism? I've been told so many times that the problem in this world is that so-and-so died too young. A couple of years ago I heard another public figure say that it was because Robert Kennedy died that American liberalism lost its way. What might Martin Luther King Jr. or Malcolm X have achieved if assassins' bullets had not cut them down in their prime?

If only we had leaders now like we did back then, so many lament. It's hard for me to write these words without a hint of sarcasm. Nostalgia belongs in the retirement home. Any organization, movement or people who rely solely (or even greatly) on a charismatic leader for their strength and their motivation are in the most precarious position possible.

"Cut off the head and the body will fall," their enemies murmur. This is a way to let those enemies dissolve your context. Just put all your belief in one leader, and sooner or later you will be lost.

Some might say that I should end this section with those words. This may be true, but I think they open the door to other considerations. We do need leadership. We have to have people who will make decisions and blaze trails; people who will stand up to warmongers and moneylenders; people who might create context, illuminate the darkness with an electronic billboard; people who could organize our vote.

I could spend a lot of time and space here criticizing our current leaders. But what would be the purpose? These leaders, no matter how much they have lost their way, are not our enemies. If I follow a man or woman who is leading me astray, then I have to accept my own culpability and blindness.

"Didn't you see the millions dying in Africa while your leaders argued about the references and jokes in the movie *Barbershop*?" someone in a later year may ask. And how will we answer? If we don't lie we might say, "I knew what was happening, but I didn't know how to act. I felt powerless and helpless and so I did nothing."

The truth hurts. We all know that. But if we can see that we need leadership and that we don't have the leadership we need, then we might begin to question why. I believe a vacuum in our leadership has been caused by a natural conservatism in the black community that echoes the smug confidence of America in general. This conservatism harbors a deep dread of our young people.

This problem has to be approached by using a two-tiered process. First, we (the elders) have to realize how we exclude

young people from taking leadership roles in our community. Why do we celebrate the blues but denigrate hip-hop? Why don't we distinguish between the major thinkers among our youth and the thugs? What are the young people telling us when they talk about bitches and ho's, motherfuckers and niggahs and bling? These are questions we shouldn't gloss over. We bear the responsibility for the lost generations of our people. Even if we see their actions as self-defeating and self-hating, we have to take responsibility for having allowed this situation to occur.

On the other hand, why do we get so upset when young men and women of African descent also want to identify with their other racial sides? Are we afraid that they're trying to abandon us? Do we want to hold them back so that they don't have a broader and more sophisticated view of their identities? Don't we know that this is their world and it is our job to support them while they gain a solid footing?

These are only the first few questions we should ask, and answer. And as we respond we should edit out all cynicism and derogatory notions from our voices and words.

These young people are our only hope. We have to liberate them where we can, decriminalize them when necessary, detoxify them if possible—but most important we have to hear what they're telling us and make way for their leadership.

And to the youth I say, You have to take the reins. You have to realize that many members of the older generation have gotten what they wanted out of the Struggle. They aren't worried about the problems of America's urban youth; at least not enough to, once again, charge the ramparts and put what they have on the line. Revolutions (both violent and nonviolent) are manned by the young. Older people have retirement accounts and diseases to support, weak constitutions and a justified fear of imprisonment. We have fallen to the rear of the column. You, the urban youth of America, must lead us.

If you, the youth, do not forgive us for fumbling, our race will be very far behind in the twenty-first century. And if we lose, the world suffers because most of America is on the wrong road already.

America has carried the notion of property and power to such an intensely negative degree that we have very little room left for humanity and art in our hearts. We work long hours, eat bad food, close our eyes to the atrocities committed in our name and spend almost everything we make on the drugs that keep us from succumbing to the emptiness of our spiritual lives. We gobble down antidepressants, sleeping pills, martinis, sitcoms and pornography in a desperate attempt to keep balance in this soulless limbo.

In a world where poetry is a contest at best and a competition at worst, where the importance of a painting is gauged by the price it can be sold for—we are to be counted among the lost. And so when I say that we need leaders and that those leaders must come from our youth, it is no idle statement. We need our young people because without their dreams to guide us we will have only cable TV and grain alcohol for succor. ■

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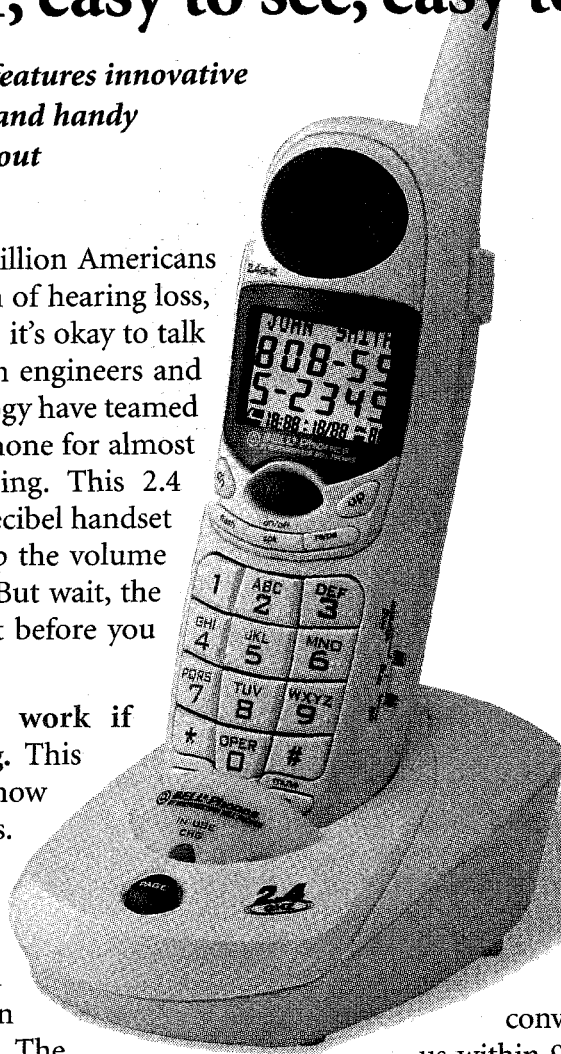
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IDAHO'S LABOR ACTIVISTS ARE TRYING TO TURN BACK THE CLOCK—BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

Reversing 'Right to Work'

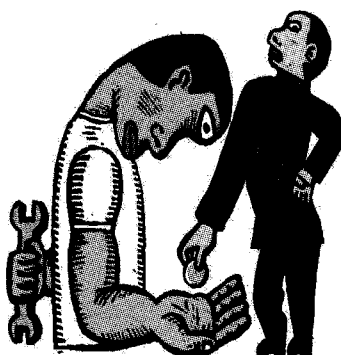
SASHA ABRAMSKY

In 2003 trade unions in Idaho launched a campaign to repeal the state's 1980s-era Right To Work law, which had hobbled organized labor by banning mandatory dues-collection in union workplaces. The petition drive gathered enough signatures to place an initiative before voters, but during the certification process county clerks disallowed thousands of them, so the measure didn't make it onto the 2004 ballot. While the campaign was under way, though, drivers heading west on I-90 toward better-paying jobs across the state line in Spokane would come across a billboard that read, IF RIGHT TO WORK IS SO GOOD, WHY ARE YOU WORKING IN WASHINGTON?

Two years on, the I-90 billboard hosts an ad for Hooters, but the unions are trying again. And as in 2004, this time around the signature-gathering effort, a grassroots, bare-bones affair, is once more coming down to the wire.

Late last August the northern Idaho town of Coeur d'Alene hosted the annual county fair, one of the high points of which is the demolition derby. On the side of an old black Mercury were painted the words SMASH RIGHT TO WORK. The car's entrance number was 86 (1986 was the year Idaho's citizenry passed the Right To Work initiative, which, wags point out, resulted in citizens being allowed the "right to work for less"), and it was driven by the friend of a recently killed son of Brad Cederblom, a large, bearded, ironworkers' union organizer. The words had been added to the car during a paint-party in front of the house of Barbara Harris, a retired electrical worker and president of the Northern Idaho Central Labor Council. They would serve, anti-Right To Workers hoped, as a low-cost magnet that would draw registered voters to sign the Repeal Right To Work petition. That summer day, in front of thousands of fans, many of them workers for local resource-sector companies, the Mercury came in second, stopping only when its back had been crumpled into the rear tires and its hood had been upended like the rocks on an earthquake's fault line.

Yet the thousands of signatures the organizers were hoping for in the wake of this gutsy derby performance didn't suddenly materialize, despite the fact that about half the electorate supports repeal, according to one Idaho State University poll. Instead, they came in from around the state over the following months in dribs and drabs, garnered at local parades, college football games, even at ski swaps and petition drives on courthouse steps. The old mining and lumber strongholds in the north—around Coeur d'Alene and the gritty industrial town of Lewiston—did generate many thousands of signatures. But in the



south of the state, in the heavily populated and traditionally nonunion areas of Boise and Idaho Falls, where a high-tech beachhead has recently been established by the influx of companies like Micron, the campaign had largely failed to gain traction by year's end. Even in the old railway hub of Pocatello, the movement didn't really lift off in the summer and fall.

Now, with weeks left until the signature-gathering deadline, as the winter snows settle over the land and as the rivers freeze solid, organizers are scrambling for signatures, trying to reassure people that employers won't blacklist those who sign their names in support of repeal. The Citizens' Committee to Repeal Right To Work is sending out thousands of petitions through direct mailings, and the Idaho Education Association has been distributing petition forms to its thousands of members and rallying its activists to help gather signatures. The member organizations of a loose progressive network called United Vision for Idaho, which includes churches and community-based social justice groups, have been lending a hand, and volunteers from union halls across the north are pounding the sidewalks of towns and villages dotting this remote landscape.

To qualify for the ballot, 6 percent of the state's registered voters, or about 48,000 people, will have to sign their names on the petitions, and the cutoff date for signatures is February 21. Dave Whaley, current president of the Idaho AFL-CIO, acknowledges that it's a race against time. By early January more than 20,000 signatures had been verified. Thousands more had been deposited with county clerks around the state and were awaiting verification. But that still left a deficit of several thousand—exactly how many, the organizers didn't know—to be gathered in the last six weeks of the campaign.

If the petition drive succeeds, it will automatically thrust Idaho to the fore of national labor politics. The national AFL-CIO, which sat on the sidelines during the signature-gathering process, would almost certainly arrive in force, hoping to set in motion a countrywide movement against the most restrictive antilabor laws. After all, there's been no successful Right To Work repeal effort since Louisiana briefly overturned its law in the mid-1970s. To counter such a movement, conservatives in Washington and their corporate backers would likely weigh in against repeal and, as in 1985–86, throw millions of dollars into the fight.

"The basic reason for Right To Work is to enhance economic development by making it possible for companies to compete with [those in] other states and internationally," says Steve Ahrens, of the solidly antiunion Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry, sitting in his office in downtown Boise, where his collection of model classic cars are on display. "It's an important part of our economic development basket of

*Sasha Abramsky is a senior fellow at the Demos Foundation. His book *Conned* will be published by the New Press in April.*

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St. Augustine warned that it is dangerous for religious people to ignore science: "Many non-Christians are well versed in natural knowledge, so they can detect vast ignorance in such a Christian and laugh it to scorn."

On the other hand, Sir Isaac Newton freely discusses the attributes and activities of God in *Principia Mathematica*, which sets forth his theory of gravity and laws of motion.

These examples represent the traditional relationship of science and religion that is too often obscured by the divisive, hot-headed rhetoric and the gross oversimplifications we often see in today's headlines. Long before the shouting and the sloganeering, scientists and theologians have pursued a unity of truth, and most theologians have agreed with the advice of Galileo's colleague, Cardinal Baronio, that the Bible "tells us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go."

Once we understand this, we have a new perspective on many present-day controversies. The current antievolution furor, for example, centers on the fixation that Genesis 1 should be taken literally, an issue that had been resolved by theologians long

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Dr. Lawrence M. Principe is Professor of the History of Science and Technology, and Professor of Chemistry at Johns Hopkins University. He received a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from Indiana University and a Ph.D. in the History of Science from Johns Hopkins University. He has won several Johns Hopkins teaching awards and the 2004 Francis Bacon Prize from the California Institute of Technology.

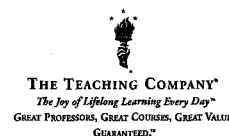
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incentives. And the business community will seek to retain it. The people of Idaho would take care of it right here in Idaho, and the more the national unions come in, the better it would be for our side. Idahoans traditionally don't welcome interference from outside the state."

Even if the initiative passes, the legislature—one of the most reliably conservative in the country in recent years—could overturn the vote. But if it did, it would likely set up a battle that would put labor conditions firmly at the center of state politics for years to come. And in a state whose politics have been skewed rightward by "morals" debates over the past decade, in a manner reminiscent of the political changes described by Thomas Frank in his book *What's the Matter With Kansas?*, that could only be good news for progressives.

Despite Ahrens's assertion that Idahoans dislike outside movements coming into their state, Right To Work is nothing if not the creation of a national conservative movement. During the first half of the 1980s the Virginia-based National Right To Work Committee began targeting states that it thought were ripe for an assault on union power. In one state after another, mainly in the South and then, increasingly, in the West—states that were swinging into the conservative bloc that formed the bedrock of Reaganism—the committee either pushed sympathetic legislators to propose Right To Work laws or organized initiative campaigns. By 1985 twenty states had passed laws gutting union power in the workplace and stating that, even in places where a union contract was in effect, with its protections covering all employees, workers couldn't be required to pay union dues.

Idaho was the twenty-first state the committee went after, its operations coordinated by a roving political consultant named Bill Wilson. At the time Idaho still had a Democratic governor, and when the Republican-controlled legislature passed Right To Work, he vetoed it. Undeterred, the committee launched an initiative campaign. Their language was, from the get-go, disingenuous. Idaho's economy was in deep trouble, and many Idahoans came to believe that Right To Work would guarantee them employment. The committee did nothing to disabuse them of that notion. On election day the measure narrowly passed, and soon afterward stories started surfacing of people going into company offices and demanding work, only to be told the companies weren't hiring.

As it turned out, 1986 was the high-water mark for Right To Workers. Idaho was the last state to pass Right To Work until 2001—when, amid a new assault on unions, and with Republicans in Congress along with groups like the Heritage Foundation pushing for passage of a National Right To Work Act, the committee managed to convince Oklahoma to enact such legislation. But despite coming in late, Idaho's law profoundly altered the state's labor conditions. The new law banned the union shop and set in motion a barrage of other changes that cumulatively eroded union power in the once-strong organized-labor state, lowered wages and made it harder for unions to maintain good benefits packages when negotiating contracts. In

1985 about 22 percent of Idaho's workforce was unionized. Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates, that number is 5 to 6 percent; the state AFL-CIO puts it at 9 percent.

Shortly after the initiative the Democrats went into a tailspin, partly because unions had been so constricted in what sorts of political activities they could engage in. Bill Wilson reportedly told a rival consultant that his campaign had, as a side product, "killed off" the state's Democratic machine.

The newly ascendant GOP repealed the state's prevailing wage statute—known as Little Davis-Bacon, a reference to the federal Davis-Bacon prevailing wage laws. It banned public-employee unions from making political contributions and engaging in voter outreach campaigns aimed at nonunion members. It also blocked increases in the state's minimum wage (the State of Washington, by contrast, now has a minimum wage more than \$2 per hour higher than that mandated by the federal government) and ended the paying of mandatory overtime if an employee worked more than eight hours in a given day. At the same time, the state's Supreme Court, its justices directly elected by an increasingly conservative populace, consistently upheld the state's "fire at will"

provisions, which allowed employers to fire nonunion employees without reason.

Less tangibly, since unions still had to represent non-union members in any work-

place in which a union-negotiated contract held sway, the incentives for joining a trade union and participating in its organizing work declined. As a result, the culture of union participation began to break down. Today there are supermarkets in Idaho that are technically union workplaces but that have virtually no union members on staff. The same holds in some of the old timber mills and paper-pulping plants. "The longer it goes, the less in touch your children are with what they have lost," believes Cindy Hedge, the treasurer of the Citizens Committee to Repeal Right To Work, whose son works a nonunion job as a manager at a Petco for just over \$10 an hour. "The leadership isn't educating our children."

"Why?" one 50-year-old union organizer in Lewiston recalls a colleague responding when asked whether he wanted to join the union, an act that would have cost him \$46 a month in dues. "I can get the exact same as you for nothing."

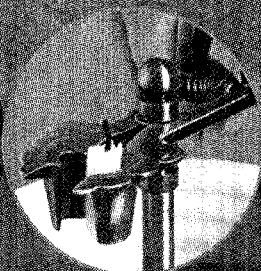
We're the testing grounds," says Dave Whaley, in his offices on the outskirts of Boise. A big man in a bright checked wool shirt and jeans, with a white walrus mustache and neatly parted gray hair, Whaley believes Right To Work has profoundly changed the state's political culture. "We're the places anti-worker rules are brought. And if they work they take them to other states and try to ram them down their throats as well."

As a result of the two-decade rollback of union influence in the state, many labor organizers argue, Idaho's unskilled workers toil for rock-bottom wages. Unemployment is, as boosters point out, low. But while the federal minimum wage is \$5.15 per hour, restaurants in Idaho, unlike in neighboring states, are allowed to pay workers barely \$3 (the shortfall between that and the minimum is supposed to be covered by tips). Not surpris-

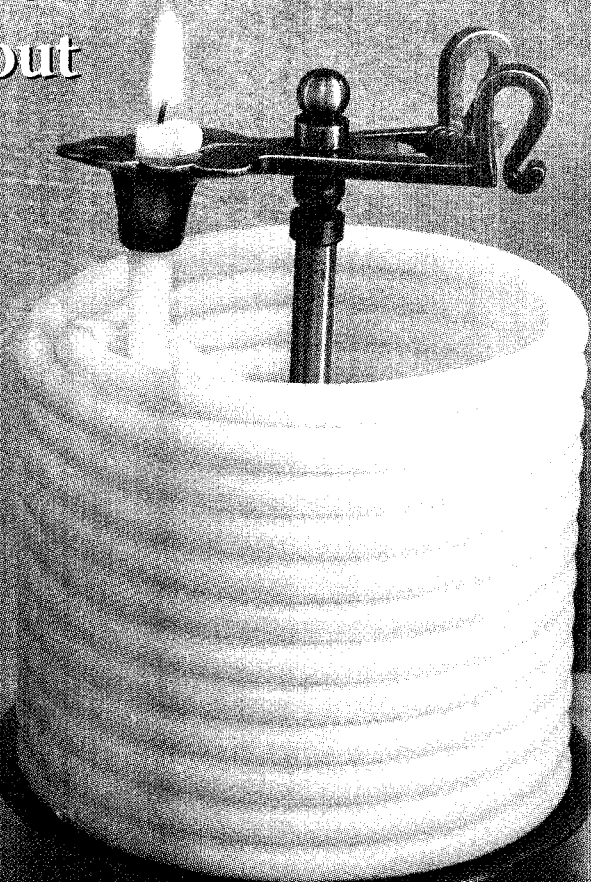
Right To Work is nothing if not the creation of a national conservative movement, which targeted twenty states before turning to Idaho.

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ingly, the low-end fast-food chains and food stands on strips like 21st Street in Lewiston pay wages that do not even begin to cover the normal costs of living. Idaho has one of the lowest median wages in the country and comes in dead last on wages for female workers. Wal-Marts, call centers, communications companies and other boom employers pay entry-level wages that barely reach \$7 per hour. Food pantries report increasing levels of hunger among the working poor, not just the unemployed—who also receive some of the worst welfare benefits in the country.

At the same time, a growing number of skilled workers in the construction trades are driving to the non-Right To Work states of Oregon and Washington, where wages are often as much as \$5 per hour higher—as much as \$10,000 a year—than even Idaho's remaining jobs for unionized tradesmen. The state's Labor Department estimated that in 1988 alone, 5,000 construction workers left Idaho. Researchers from the University of Idaho found that in 2000 skilled workers were leaving the state faster than younger workers were being trained to replace them. "We lost the cream of the crop," explains Jim Kerns, ex-head of the state AFL-CIO and currently working as state coordinator of the repeal campaign. "They went to other states to make a living."

Yet, says Shirl Boyce, vice president of economic development for the Boise Chamber of Commerce, companies looking to relocate to Idaho routinely tell him, "If you're not Right To Work, we're not interested in coming to your area." Boyce—whose father worked in the mines from age 14, and who argues forcefully against the gutting of pensions and the denial of healthcare benefits to many workers—acknowledges with more than a trace of unhappiness that "the old notion of organized labor is not perceived to be a positive thing. We have to decide whether we're going to be competitive or not, pretty frankly."

What does that translate to? "We've seen long periods of time where we haven't gained in terms of benefits and wages. We haven't been able to bargain even for the cost of living," says Jim Wallace of the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters. "It's pretty sad when you've got a state advertising its cheap labor."

Lewiston, founded in the 1860s by migrants hoping to strike it rich in the goldfields along the Salmon River, is today the furthest-inland port in the country. Its geography is also a stark reminder of the heyday of industrial unionism. Situated at the confluence of the spectacular Snake and Salmon rivers, which were made navigable during the middle of the last century by a series of dams so that barges and large ships could transport lumber, paper, grain and minerals, the town was once at the epicenter of labor activism in the mountain West. It is towered over by the smoking chimneys of the vast Potlatch sawmill and pulping plant, the rotten-cabbage fumes pumped out by the plant a daily fact of life in the area, and it is home to vast silos storing grain from throughout the Midwest for shipping down the river to Portland and points overseas. Going all the way back to the days of the Wobblies, unions in this region have fought, and sometimes workers have died, for better contracts and working conditions.

At Potlatch, where trucks deliver huge numbers of tree trunks every day to be sorted and stacked by a gigantic crane

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on rails, the Steel Workers and other unions used to have thousands of members; today they have far fewer, but they still retain enough strength to generate some of the best labor contracts in the state. Yet in the wake of Right To Work large numbers of workers have opted out of paying union dues. As a result, in many workplaces unions are increasingly seen as toothless wonders. "You've got no power," explains Kerns. "That employer is going to say to you, 'Here's what you get and that's all you get.' Or they say, 'We're not going to give you anything. Go on strike if you want.' They can't go on strike; they've got only five members. They couldn't even maintain a picket line."

But while Lewiston's unions may seem part of another era, this story isn't about a handful of Luddites waging a quixotic struggle against the inevitable march of time. At its heart the anti-Right To Work campaign is a relearning process: It is teaching people who've come of age in a Right To Work environment about the history of labor struggles, the benefits of union culture and the spiral of downward pressures on wages and benefits that is turning Idaho into a US version of Third World maquiladoras. In that sense, it ultimately goes far beyond unionism, becoming a battle about the future contours of the American economy.

Idaho's resurgent fight around Right To Work is about the flexing of muscle: Can its proponents get enough states to main-

tain or enact Right To Work statutes by persuading them that the laws make states more "competitive" for potential employers? Or can unions and living-wage advocates resist Right To Work laws by highlighting the skills-and-brain drain that takes jobs in construction, carpentry, electrical work and other trades to higher-wage states? In northern Idaho unions have had some success in encouraging this trend, with skilled workers driving to Clarkston, Spokane and other towns in Oregon and Washington.

The most immediate question, of course, is, Can advocates of repeal get out their message and mobilize voters against these laws? "It's not just, 'How does it affect you and your wages?'" It's about access to healthcare and retirement, people working two, three jobs just to survive," says Jim Wallace. Explaining why, in the wake of Oklahoma's passage of Right To Work, he sees it as particularly important to strike back against the movement, Dave Whaley says, "As long as you have Right To Work testing-grounds out there, the other states are going to be under assault, as they pick them off one state at a time."

Even if the Repeal Right To Work campaign narrowly fails to gather enough signatures this time around, Whaley says, the issue is too important to drop. The lessons learned and the connections made with people around the state will, he argues, be vital for organizers looking to place the initiative on the ballot again two years down the road. ■

WHY ARE PROGRESSIVES IN A SEMI-COMATOSE STATE WHILE THE RIGHT TAKES OVER?

A Letter to the American Left

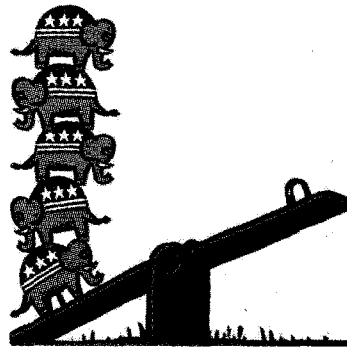
Nothing made a more lasting impression during my journey through America than the semi-comatose state in which I found the American left.

I know, of course, that the term "left" does not have the same meaning and ramifications here that it does in France.

And I cannot count how many times I was told there has never been an authentic "left" in the United States, in the European sense.

But at the end of the day, my progressive friends, you may coin ideas in whichever way you like. The fact is: You do have a right. This right, in large part thanks to its neoconservative battalion, has brought about an ideological transformation that is both substantial and striking.

And the fact is that nothing remotely like it has taken shape on the other side—to the contrary, through the looking glass of the American "left" lies a desert of sorts, a deafening silence, a cosmic ideological void that, for a reader of Whitman or Thoreau, is thoroughly enigmatic. The 60-year-old "young" Democrats who have desperately clung to the old formulas of



the Kennedy era; the folks of MoveOn.org who have been so great at enlisting people in the electoral lists, at protesting against the war in Iraq and, finally, at helping to revitalize politics but whom I heard in Berkeley, like Puritans of a new sort, treating the lapses of a libertine President as quasi-equivalent to the neo-McCarthyism of his fiercest political rivals; the anti-Republican strategists confessing they had never set foot in one of those neo-evangelical mega-churches that are the ultimate (and most Machiavellian)

laboratories of the "enemy," staring in disbelief when I say I've spent quite some time exploring them; ex-candidate Kerry, whom I met in Washington a few weeks after his defeat, haggard, ghostly, faintly whispering in my ear: "If you hear anything about those 50,000 votes in Ohio, let me know"; the supporters of Senator Hillary Clinton who, when I questioned them on how exactly they planned to wage the battle of ideas, casually replied they had to win the battle of money first, and who, when I persisted in asking what the money was meant for, what projects it would fuel, responded like fundraising automatons gone mad: "to raise more money"; and then, perhaps more than anything else, when it comes to the lifeblood of the left, the writers and artists, the men and women who fashion public opinion, the intellectuals—I

Bernard-Henri Lévy is the author of American Vertigo: Traveling America in the Footsteps of Tocqueville (Random House).

found a curious lifelessness, a peculiar streak of timidity or irritability, when confronted with so many seething issues that in principle ought to keep them as firmly mobilized as the Iraq War or the so-called "American Empire" (the denunciation of which is, sadly, all that remains when they have nothing left to say).

For an outside observer it is passing strange, for instance, that a number of progressives needed, by their own admission, to wait for Hurricane Katrina before they got indignant about, or even learned about, the sheer scale of the outrageous poverty blighting American cities.

For a European intellectual used to the battlefield of ideas, it is simply incomprehensible that more voices weren't raised long ago, in the name of no less than the force of "the Enlightenment," to denounce the ridiculous fraud of the anti-Darwinian supporters of "intelligent design."

And what about the death penalty? How can it be that there isn't yet, within the political parties, especially the Democratic Party—which everyone knows will never budge on the question without decisive internal pressure—a trend of opinion calling for the abolition of this civilized barbarity?

And Guantánamo? And Abu Ghraib? And the special prisons in Central Europe, those areas where the rule of law no longer applies? I know, of course, that the press has denounced them. I know you have journalists who, in a matter of days, accomplished what our French press still hasn't finished forty years after our Algerian War. But since when does the press excuse citizens from their political duties? Why haven't we heard from more intellectuals like Susan Sontag—or even Gore Vidal and Tony Kushner (with whom I disagree on most other grounds) on this vexed and vital issue? And what should we make of that handful of individuals who, after September 11, launched the debate about the circumstances in which torture might suddenly be justified?

And I'm not even talking about Bush. I won't even mention Bush's gross lies about the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, except for the sake of assembling the conclusive evidence. I know, of course, that you denounce him—but mechanically, I am almost tempted to say ritualistically. And yet the United States nearly impeached Nixon because he had spied on his

enemies and lied. They impeached Clinton for a venial lie about inappropriate conduct. How is it, then, that it took so long to draw a parallel between those lies and a lie about which the least you can say is that its consequences were anything but venial? How is it that so few "public intellectuals" have been found, within the confines of this formidable, impetuous American democracy, who can bring up the idea of impeaching George Bush for lying?

Some will retort that the "public intellectual" is a European specialty, that we shouldn't blame Americans for their infidelity to a tradition that is not their own. What do such killjoys make of the Norman Mailer of the 1960s? Of the Arthur Miller of *The Crucible*? Or of that golden age of civil rights awareness, when great writers enunciated what was right and good and true?

Others will object that the massive, resounding mobilization of civil society is not an American custom. All you need to do to convince yourself of the untruth of this is remember the 1960s and the movement for civil rights, then for the rights of minorities in general, which were the honor of the country and did not stem, let it be emphasized, from any of the major political parties.

Still others will wax ironic about the disease of writing up petitions, a French specialty, warded off by American pragmatism. Here the objection is more serious; and I know the fatuity that can exist in the mania for nonstop political engagement in the name of myriad causes—but aren't you afflicted, my American friends, with the radically opposite sickness? Hasn't the ethics of sobriety won once too often, with you, over the ethics of conviction? And how could one not yearn for a petition that would address our common nausea when faced with the spectacle of a diabetic, blind, nearly deaf old man, pushed in his wheelchair to the San Quentin execution chamber in California?

I might be mistaken, but it seems to me that a large part of the country is waiting for this. Everywhere, in the innermost reaches of America, you can meet men and women who hope for great voices capable of echoing their impatience in a momentous way. If I were an American writer, I would try to ponder the lessons of the totalitarian century and those of democracy, Tocqueville-style, all at once, in the same breath, and with the same rigor. ■

LETTERS

C O N T I N U E D

(Continued From Page 2)

prising. After all, the AMA is equally silent on physician participation in lethal injection executions. The AMA's prohibitions against participation in capital punishment are quite specific but are buried deep in its website in "Opinion E-2.06" of the AMA's code of medical ethics. The AMA sends its members information about "liability reform" and "medicare physician payment reform," but I have yet to receive an AMA alert asking me to stay away from the death chamber. JONATHAN I. GRONER, MD

Portland, Ore.

■ Exposure to very loud music does more than produce psychological damage and cultural dissonance. Two physical effects can ensue: (a) loss of auditory acuity, with possible eventual pre-

mature deafness with attendant disability; and (b) a significant proportion of those exposed will develop carotid hypertension, with possible eventual complications such as heart attacks or strokes. Thus, this method of torture can be grouped with others that produce physical damage but leave no immediate telltale marks.

WILLIAM MORTON, MD

Portland, Ore.

■ I wonder whether the musicians whose works were blared at prisoners could sue the government for illegal use of their copyrighted songs. I encourage Bruce Springsteen, Rage Against the Machine and Eminem, all known to be critical of the Bush Administration, to bring suit and to donate whatever they are awarded to a human rights organization. LOIS LEVEEN

Ottawa

■ Pope Innocent IV, who in 1252 extended the practice of civil courts to the Inquisition, insisted that torture could only be done *citra diminutionem membri*—without breaking limbs. It was, as Michel Foucault noted, a regulated practice for which public records were kept. We rightly regard this with horror, but in our own time there are apparently no limits to a practice that we pretend does not exist. JORDAN BISHOP

Somerset, NJ

■ The Golden Rule: Do unto your prisoners as you would have your captors do unto you. If I were again in military service, I would worry about becoming a prisoner when my government has a policy that promotes torture.

BERTRAM G. MURRAY JR.

BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Color of Money

GREG TATE

CAN'T STOP WON'T STOP: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation.

By Jeff Chang.

St. Martins. 560 pp. \$27.95.

WHY WHITE KIDS LOVE HIP HOP: Wankstas, Wiggers, Wannabes, and the New Reality of Race in America.

By Bakari Kitwana.

Basic Civitas. 222 pp. \$23.

HIP HOP MATTERS: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement.

By S. Craig Watkins.

Beacon. 295 pp. \$24.95.

THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s.

By James Edward Smethurst.

Chapel Hill. 488 pp. \$59.95.

All of these books are as much about politics as popular culture and the art of the MC—not to mention his cousins the break dancer, the turntablist and the spray-can artist. This will surprise no one who knows that black art, black pop and black politics have long been intertwined modes of resistance in the African diaspora, from the coded liberation theology of plantation spirituals to the oppositional wit of Delta blues, New Orleans jazz, swing, bebop, Motown and Stax soul, free jazz, funk, black rock, salsa and reggae. Reading these books about hip-hop can provoke a sense of nostalgia and paradox for someone like this writer, who has watched and occasionally abetted the light-speed journey hip-hop has made in less than twenty years from folk culture to commercial subculture to global youth culture to global capitalist marketing tool. The nostalgia derives from a pronounced sense of loss, the kind former Black Panther Elaine Brown captured in the title of her memoir, *A Taste of Power*. The moment when we held that power on our own terms, when hip-hop was considered

mad-scary, dangerous and actionable by Congress and national law-enforcement agencies, has turned to dust—or, more accurately, the fool's gold of nouveau bling fortunes. The paradox comes from feeling that hip-hop was *sooo* twentieth century, so prefigurative and definitive of the late century, and yet just as full of portent for our twenty-first-century nervous systems. Our current vision of the millennium—that of a world rocked by organized terror, cybernetic capitalism and creativity, and a growing antidemocratic apparatus of policing and surveillance—is the world hip-hop has been reporting on since the early 1980s.

How and why hip-hop predicted today's cultural politics is the bailiwick of Jeff Chang's tour de force chronicle *Can't Stop Won't Stop*. Chang is a widely published journalist and activist based in the Bay Area, and his writing cogently and elegantly combines street reportage, music criticism, mother wit, semiotics and political analysis. As you'd expect, he begins his tale in the Bronx. What's surprising is that it opens not with Zulu Nation founder and hip-hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa but with Yankee Reggie Jackson, the roaring antiracist mouth of the 1977 World Series, whom Chang identifies as an outspoken Bronx-based black pop icon of the day. As Chang observes, what made the South Bronx what it was back in the day—a crucible of Afro-diasporic rage, rampage and culture—were the projects, that archipelago of isolated sky-rise housing prisons to which black and Latino populations had been relocated by Robert Moses.

Any hip-hop fan with an old-school issue of *The Source* knows that before there was hip-hop there were gangs, and that Bambaataa (*a k a Bam*) was a major player in both. But Chang digs deeper, taking us back to the summer of 1971, when gang leader Benjamin Melendez and friends—members of the legendary crews the Ghetto Brothers, Savage Skulls and the Savage Nomads—tried to mediate a peace accord and become community power brokers at City Hall. (Their failure and destruction as a result of forces both external and internecine mirror those of the Young Lords

Greg Tate is the author of Fly Boy in the Butter-milk and Midnight Lightning: Jimi Hendrix and the Black Experience, and the editor of Everything But the Burden: What White People Are Taking From Black Culture. He is also the leader of the band Burnt Sugar.

and the Black Panther Party, and later efforts on the part of Bloods and Crips, Jim Brown and Minister Louis Farrakhan in LA after the Rodney King rebellion.) Their example, a rechanneling of gang fervor and flavor toward constructive communalism, set the stage for the sonic revolution launched by legendary DJ Kool Herc.

Herc, a Jamaican transplant who struggled to lose his island accent and become a homeboy, re-created the kind of massive sound systems that had dominated the fervent ghetto culture of his Caribbean years. Of hip-hop's four celebrated elements, three—break dancing, rapping and turntabling—pretty much began at Herc's parties. The fourth element, graffiti, or graf (also known as spray-can art or aerosol painting or simply writing), had a parallel history, Chang reveals, in the multiethnic, cross-class, interborough, interstate East Coast youth-culture scene. That history would eerily and errantly predict hip-hop's ability to dissolve social and geographic boundaries among diverse young'uns with style and rebellious comradery.

Chang's incisive portrait of Bambaataa locates the source of hip-hop's current global outreach in the incipient Pan-Afrikanism of Bam's adolescence. That collective vision of Africans at home and abroad drew not only on his folks' admiration for Marcus Garvey but on the warrior tactics he'd observed in the 1964 Michael Caine film *Zulu*, the doctrines of the Nation of Islam (an active presence in the projects) and a trip to Africa he made after winning a high school essay contest. Extraordinarily prophetic, Bam sensed that hip-hop would attain global significance at a time when Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, who would become the world's first hip-hop supergroup, declined a recording offer in the late 1970s because they felt no one would pay to hear some guys talk over a record. Flash was hardly alone in his bleak and, as it turned out, utterly mistaken analysis of hip-hop's creative possibilities and market potential. In fact, as late as the mid-'90s hip-hop was still considered a fad.

Hip-hop's commercial breakthrough came in 1979, with the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight." The extended version, as Public Enemy's Chuck D recalls in Chang's book, achieved the improbable feat of condensing the energy and excitement of an all-night hip-hop party into fifteen minutes. Once the genie was out of the bottle, an industry was born. Its meteoric rise dovetailed with Reaganomics; Iran/contras; crack; MTV; Spike, Nike and Mike; run, Jesse, run; Farrakhan at Madison Square Garden; and the hate-crime demonstrations that defined New York's racial politics in the '80s—a first phase that could be said to have culminated on that April day in 1992 when the Rodney King verdict came down and NWA's "fuck tha police" became more than a catchy chorus composed in honor of police chief Daryl Gates's private army SWAT.

In his subchapters on Public Enemy and Ice Cube, Chang lays bare the giddy hopes and inherent instability of a politics built upon African-American invention, Black Nationalist poetics, lighthearted locker-room misogyny, lumpen-proletariat rabble-rousing, Jew-baiting, youthful exuberance, climbing the *Billboard* charts and selling your soul for malt liquor endorsements. Hip-hop's other epic tale of mutually assured self-destruction, that of Biggie Smalls and Tupac Shakur, is strangely given short shrift by Chang. Yet their murders at the hands of what we now heavily suspect were gang and police operatives speak volumes about how life decimated art as hip-hop's success moved it from the radical fringe to a ravenous corporate mainstream that came with real gangsters in tow. Chang attributes

hip-hop's loss of innocence and its declining political advocacy to censorship as much as commodification. After the dual attacks on NWA and Ice T initiated by national police organizations and Tipper Gore's PMRC, corporate labels shied away from hip-hop in its more militant incarnations.

The surgical separation of hip-hop and politics effected by its insertion into the mainstream has had a wounding but not dispiriting effect on hip-hop activist-intellectuals of color like Chang. Like him, many of them have carried the political passions engendered by agitprop avatars PE, KRS-One and NWA into adulthood, academia and street action on both coasts. It may be for this reason that Chang ends his book in 2000, with a report on a live hip-hop rally against Proposition 21, the draconian Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act. That demonstration culminated in a rainbow coalition of black, brown, yellow and white fists raised to the sky against the powers that be—clearly meant as an antidote to the hypersexual, ultraviolent image that commercial hip-hop cultivates today, partly in service to its corporate masters. This parting shot from life before Bush also allows Chang to skirt the obvious question that hip-hop politics, like all progressive movements, faces in the wake of 9/11—how to utilize its cultural and technological savvy to awaken the digitally narcotized and dramatically intensify the terms of American political debate.

In a landscape where thoughts of grand action are overwhelmed by fears of what Bush, Blair and bin Laden might do tomorrow and how Fox will spin it for the masses, the notion that today's machine-programmed hip-hop nation will once again sing of fighting the power can seem quite quixotic. But as Bakari Kitwana argues in *Why White Kids Love Hip Hop*, there is an organizing potential in the interracial millennium generation for whom hip-hop is still a centrifugal force, and who continue to draw sustenance from those aspects of hip-hop that aren't corporate controlled. Kitwana, a former editor at *The Source*, is the author of *The Rap on Gangsta Rap and the Hip Hop Generation*. He was also co-founder of the National Hip Hop Political Convention, established in part as a response to what some saw as the co-optation of hip-hop activism by Russell Simmons's Summit Action Network. In many ways Kitwana's title is misleading, since the book is largely about the potential for future coalition-building among hip-hop activists across class and age lines. Despite its promise of prescriptions, it's a reflection on the hip-hop progressive's internal strife rather



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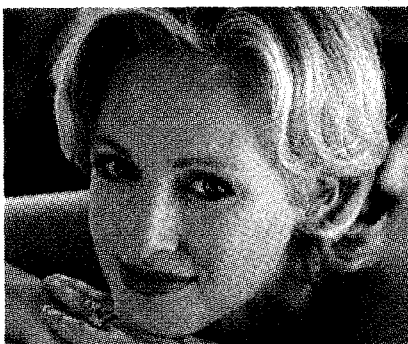
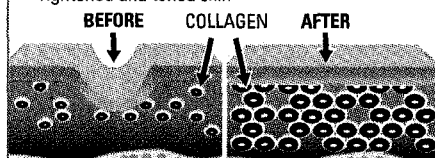
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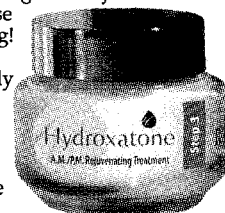
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than a battle plan, proving that hip-hop activism already suffers from that uneasy middle-age condition common to the left, whose time and energy are vitiated as much by the war within as by the war without.

S. Craig Watkins's *Hip Hop Matters* covers everything from hip-hop's relationship to the 1990s war on youth civil liberties that emerged in various California crime bills, to the emergence of Detroit's Kwame Kilpatrick as the nation's first self-proclaimed hip-hop mayor, to Sean "Puffy" Combs's glammed-out Vote or Die youth registration drive in 2004. If Chang's book is the best to date on hip-hop's social, political and aesthetic history, Watkins's study is the best yet on the hip-hop industry. Watkins has provided nothing less than a political economy of hip-hop, one that doesn't shy away from the dirty business hip-hop has become—especially as the shift from selling dope beats and rhymes to the selling of ass and overpriced leisurewear became the movement's primary (and, not incidentally, most lucrative) focus. He's also attentive to the way hip-hop was affected by the appalling rates of incarceration and AIDS in black communities.

People tend to get a bit heated if you don't distinguish between hip-hop and the hip-hop industry. What's often forgotten is that hip-hop used the evil empire of the industry to further its own ends—subverting the mechanisms and formulas of pop to forge platinum hits with little or no airplay, music video or promotion—as witness the rise of Public Enemy. But hip-hop also paid a price for the ticket of inclusion. By making a devil's bargain with hyper-capitalism, hip-hop lost not only its freedom of speech but its powers of speech: the gift it once had to artfully and hypnotically articulate the social fallout from public policies that have consigned one in ten Americans to poverty. Watkins adeptly frames and critiques the gulf that hip-hop's ascension to a \$12 billion-a-year market has inevitably opened between urban reality and hip-hop-derived ghetto fantasies like the Xbox game Grand Theft Auto.

One day a book will be written about the continuities between the Harlem Renaissance era, the Black Arts Movement and hip-hop. When that epic gets written, one of its ur-texts will be *The Black Arts Movement*. James Edward Smethurst's scholarship makes it abundantly clear that the precedent for cutting-edge African-American musical and poetic forms and politics was established, respectively, by Langston Hughes in the 1920s, Richard Wright in the '40s and Amiri Baraka in the '60s; the book also reminds us that, as with

hip-hop, the center of gravity of the black radical cultural movements of the '60s swung from the North to the West Coast to the South. As it happens, the Black Arts Movement came into being between 1965 and 1973, when much of the first hip-hop generation was busy being born. The question of who belongs to that generation is up for grabs—many of the founding fathers, like Herc and Bambaataa, were born in the late '50s, while its core audience today was born between the mid-'70s and early '80s. Most of the hip-hop audience barely (if ever) experienced it as a radicalizing political force, and for new listeners it's merely another Internet menu item.

My own definition of a hip-hop generation is generous and circumspect: anyone who between the years 1977 and 1998 caught the fever for the flavor of the culture, and believed it was going to change the world against the naysayers and nabobs who thought it wouldn't last. For a brief moment we got to stand on top of the mountain and pop Cristal or organic cranberry juice, as the case might be, when it did bum-rush the record industry. Where we are now is somewhere on the other side of that mountain—a place where the big question on the table for hip-hop's progressive wing is whether a generation that came

to politics through a pop-music subculture can continue to run with that subculture at a time when politics is increasingly defined by what the right does with military power rather than by what oppositional citizens do with their own.

Neither Chang, Kitwana nor Watkins discusses Iraq, 9/11 or the Patriot Act, or how any contemporary discussions around race and racism must include South America, Asia and the Middle East. Du Bois's observation that the problem of the twentieth century was the color line still stands for the twenty-first. But the hip-hop generation's notion of American racial politics is in need of a little post-9/11, post-Patriot Act color correction. Kitwana and his cohorts envisioned a hip-hop-generation takeover of the Democratic Party during the last election's youth-voter efforts. Romantic as that was, today's progressive politics have never hurt from a blushing ardor for the sleeping dragon of people's power. And if hip-hop culture, more politically asleep now than ever before, can produce a few more active dreamers with the wit, realism and enthusiasm of Chang, Kitwana and Watkins, progressive politics might not have to seem as Jurassic as the Bushies have made it appear to America's vast, Twin Tower-traumatized daydream nation. ■

In a Lonely Place

MARTHA NUSSBAUM

THE SOLITUDE OF SELF: Thinking About Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

By Vivian Gornick. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 135 pp. \$17.

In 1840 the young Elizabeth Cady Stanton attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London with her new husband, abolitionist politician Henry Stanton. At least she tried to attend it. On her arrival at the convention site, the people in charge refused to seat her because she was a woman. All the women

were required to withdraw to the periphery, where, Vivian Gornick writes in her new book on Stanton, *The Solitude of Self*, "they could see but not be seen, hear but not be heard." Most of the men, including her husband, went along with this arrangement, unwilling to complicate discussion of the all-important antislavery issue. Only a few, notably William Lloyd Garrison, refused to participate on terms that excluded women. Stanton recalled later that it was on

this day that she realized for the first time that "in the eyes of the world I was not as I was in my own eyes, I was only a woman."

So began the career of one of America's greatest radicals. Perhaps, however, it really began much earlier. When Stanton, around age 12, heard of a local woman who had suffered outrageous but legally sanctioned injustice at the hands of her dead husband's son, she grabbed a knife and cut the offending passage out of the law book on her father's desk. Her father told her that she could work to change the law but that, in Gornick's words, defacing the book was "not only forbidden...it was also useless." She reflects that at this point it was "already too late: an educated, upright, law-and-

Martha Nussbaum, a professor of philosophy and law at the University of Chicago, is the author of numerous books, most recently Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership (Harvard).



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order household had spawned a daughter who was going to cut the laws out of the books with a knife."

Gornick loves Stanton's uncompromising radicalism, her inextinguishable and rather joyous sense of outrage. In this woman who raised seven children during the day and wrote at night, her prolific output fueled by an abiding passion for justice, Gornick finds the archetype for the feminist movement she knew in the 1970s, with its creative energy, its excitement at having identified the problem to be solved: "That is a moment of joy, when a sufficiently large number of people are galvanized by a social explanation of how their lives have taken shape and are gathered together in the same place at the same time, meeting again and again in restaurants, lecture halls, and apartments for the pleasure of elaborating the insight and repeating the analysis. It is the joy of revolutionary politics, and it was ours." Stanton, Gornick argues, is the model for this revolutionary feminism, because she was the one who always refused to scale back her just demands out of political expediency, who remained faithful to the radical vision of full equality.

Stanton's revolutionary life was not entirely happy. Although she and her husband initially shared political passions, they gradually grew apart, and the whole abolitionist

movement, with its insistence that slavery had to be the sole focus of attention, came to seem to her deeply compromised. Stanton's radical demand for equality for both blacks and women lost her, moreover, the friendship of many feminist women, who were willing to postpone the suffrage fight to be on good terms with powerful men and to preserve solidarity with the abolitionist cause. (Stanton's occasional racist remarks denigrating the intelligence of some black men arose, Gornick suggests somewhat unconvincingly, from intense frustration at finding women's equally just demands neglected, time and again.) Nonetheless, Stanton loved her life and her enduring friendships, and she loved her struggle. In 1878, after recalling the exhausting efforts she and other feminists had expended in the cause, she then says, "And all our theme is as fresh and absorbing as it was the day we started.... In this struggle for justice we have deepened and broadened our own lives, and extended the horizon of our vision."

Gornick's account of Stanton's life is exhilarating and deftly written. She follows Stanton from her rebellious childhood through the early days of her engagement with abolitionism to that moment of conversion in London when she realizes that women aren't respected, even in the abolitionist movement. From there, the road leads to the famous meeting at Seneca Falls in 1848, when Stanton boldly showed her radical colors, demanding suffrage for women. The next fifty-four years (she died in 1902) were filled with passionate speech-making and activism, as Stanton traveled tirelessly around the country on the lecture circuit with her friend Susan B. Anthony. In one seven-month period, for example, they lectured 148 times in 140 towns in ten states. Gornick vividly conveys the combination of constructive anger and ceaseless activity that marked Stanton's relationship to the world around her, and she makes her refusal to surrender her radical demands seem deeply right. Gornick makes a good case that Stanton is indeed the key precursor to the feminist movement of the late twentieth century, which refused to compromise while at the same time maintaining a hopeful attitude to the potential of law as a force for social reform.

Gornick, however, wants us to find in Stanton not just an admirable revolutionary but a profound thinker. Stanton's 1892 speech "The Solitude of Self" provides the book not just with its title but also with ideas that Gornick sees as key to a proper understanding of what is American in the feminist movement, and what has made it flourish in America as, perhaps, nowhere else. (I'm not sure what the com-

parison class is: Surely feminism flourishes in Western Europe and Scandinavia, in India, in Africa, in much of the developing world.) Here trouble begins, for the ideas of Stanton's speech are in fact extremely unclear, and Gornick's account of it is even more problematic.

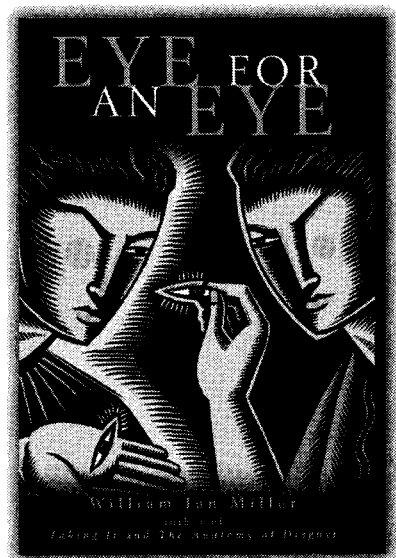
In "The Solitude of Self," Stanton gave two very different accounts of what the "solitude of self" is and, correspondingly—though without in any way signaling the difference—two very different accounts of why equal education and citizenship for women are important. The speech, in fact, is a mess; to get anything out of it one must forage around in it and reconstruct it.

On one account, which Stanton repeatedly emphasizes, the "solitude of self" is simply the fact that "we come into the world alone...[and] we leave it alone." Each woman, like each man, "must make the voyage of life alone." As a variant on this theme, Stanton often observes that, however much we may like to depend on others, we never can: Any person can be abandoned at any time. "Rich and poor, intelligent and ignorant, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious, man and woman; it is ever the same, each soul must depend wholly on itself." Here, solitude is something bad and usually painful, a "march" and a "battle." It is, however, inevitable. Because solitude is the inevitable condition of our existence, each person must be schooled to deal with it, taking responsibility for his or her own life: "As in our extremity we must depend on ourselves, the dictates of wisdom point to complete individual development." Women have never been given this development, and this is unfair, since they need it as much as any. Even if they think they can depend on men, they can't. It is unjust not to prepare them for self-sufficiency.

There is, however, another very different account of solitude in the speech, one that tugs against the first. Every human life, Stanton suggests, contains a precious inner world, one that no other person can enter, an inner space that is rightly called "conscience" and "our self." Included in "conscience" is the power of autonomous choice, and this power is seen as something deeply precious, hidden away inside us, "more hidden than the caves of the gnome." Here, solitude is not a painful absence of connection but a joyous realization of one's inner depths.

This second conception of solitude, which Stanton explicitly connects to an American Protestant heritage, yields a different explanation of why women should be given education and political rights: because this inner world is precious and sublime, and demands respect. Respecting it means developing it. Here Stanton speaks

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of a woman's "right of individual conscience and judgment," her "birthright to self-sovereignty." In other words, even if women could depend utterly on men and would never lack external support, it would still be an egregious offense to fail to give them the freedom of choice and self-development. It is their right, because of the depth and preciousness of the self.

The tension between the two accounts is not just a prissy philosopher's problem: It impedes any attempt to read the speech and to be moved by a coherent set of emotions. The speech's rhetoric jolts oddly back and forth between horror at solitude and love of the rich inner life that is revealed in solitude. Is solitude something ugly or something precious? A grim fate or a sublime opportunity? It is difficult to follow the speech emotionally, so jarring are these attitudinal shifts.

How might one make a coherent whole out of Stanton's ideas? Gornick, unfortunately, does not try. Her account of the speech, piecemeal and truncated, has all the problems of the speech itself, and more, for she adds to Stanton's already problematic text the idea that it is a sense of shame that has caused women to close off their inner world from others. According to Gornick, Stanton "realized that to the greatest degree the solitude is self-created, the result of

being locked from birth into a psychology of shame." This sentiment, for which I find no evidence in the speech itself, and which seems to me quite foreign to Stanton's unabashed personality, as Gornick herself depicts it, strengthens the idea that solitude is something unfortunate and nonadmirable, and even casts doubt on Stanton's own insistence that it is inevitable. (For surely, women might learn not to be ashamed of themselves, and let's hope that there is a lot less shame around now, in connection with being female, than there was in the nineteenth century.) Moreover, Gornick also connects the "solitude of self" to Stanton's unpleasant experiences with rivalry and animosity within the feminist movement, thus further bolstering the idea that solitude is all bad. That reading, however, just won't do as a reading of the whole text and its most powerful arguments.

I think we might put Stanton's two theses together as follows. We see that we must ultimately live and die alone. At first this condition seems horrible to us. But as we investigate it, we find that there is something precious in the solitude of the inner self, a world within each person "more inaccessible than the ice-cold mountains, more profound than the midnight sea." These romantic images of the beauty of solitude, of

which Stanton was fond, suggest a further romantic thought: This inner life is actually something awe-inspiring, something sublime, to which we can rightly give the names "conscience" and "birthright to self-sovereignty." Once we start thinking this way and learn to love, even revere, the sublime beauty of each person's inner life, we see that we have not just one but two reasons for educating women and giving them the vote: not just because they may need these practical abilities in some time of abandonment but because conscience deserves respect, and to respect conscience is to give it space to unfold.

This reconstruction not only makes sense of the whole; it also links Stanton's speech, as she herself did, to America's Puritan heritage, where similar ideas can easily be found (for example, Roger Williams's beliefs about religious liberty). The speech still isn't a successful example of political thought, since Stanton never works out the contradictions in it to arrive at a clear thesis. But if we understand her in this way, we can see what it means to say that her feminism taps a distinctively American tradition, creating a type of feminism that is both radical and utterly in line with deep American traditions and ideas. In this sense, Gornick is right to say that this sort of feminism is distinctively American. It is very different, for

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example, from the feminisms I encounter in India, where images of women's solidarity abound and images of inner beauty are far rarer. Gornick, unfortunately, does not help us understand the speech, because she does not even find it puzzling and inconsistent. Indeed, she gives Stanton high marks as a philosopher, comparing her to Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir and John Stuart Mill.

Gornick's book, then, fails to accomplish one of its goals, that of helping us understand Stanton's distinctive ideas and see them as major contributions to thought. It succeeds admirably, however, in its primary purpose, that of bringing to life an activist whose anger, energy and uncompromising hunger for justice still serve today as a paradigm of American feminism at its best. ■

The Geography of Fear

THOMAS J. SUGRUE

SPRAWL: A Compact History.

By Robert Bruegmann. Chicago. 301 pp. \$27.50.

BOURGEOIS NIGHTMARES: Suburbia, 1870-1930.

By Robert M. Fogelson. Yale. 264 pp. \$30.

SUNDOWN TOWNS: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism.

By James Loewen. The New Press. 562 pp. \$29.95.

Deerfield, Illinois, is little different in appearance from most postwar American suburbs. If a resident of Troy, Michigan, or Alpharetta, Georgia, were to find herself in Deerfield today, the place would feel familiar. A community of mostly single-family detached houses on large, well-landscaped lots along curvilinear streets, Deerfield was a small village on Chicago's periphery in 1950. Its strongest selling point—then and now—is that it was not the city. Like most of Chicago's satellites, it is overwhelmingly white. It is a prosperous community with relatively low taxes and excellent public schools and services. Its location offers economic advantages to area residents. It is convenient to the suburban office parks and malls where the lion's share of metropolitan Chicago's new jobs have been created. Deerfield is part of an increasingly self-contained galaxy of suburbs and exurbs that extends largely unbroken for nearly fifty miles north and west of the city. What remains of the prairie and farmland that once began in Deerfield's backyard is now cordoned off in scattered parks and the occasional undeveloped lot. Most Deerfielders don't even commute to Chicago; they are more likely to be day-trippers than workers in the Windy City.

Almost from the day the first kidney-shaped cul-de-sac was cut into the prairie

soil, these metropolitan landscapes have been the subject of intense political debate. In 1961, looking out onto the Deerfields and Levittowns and Park Forests and Lakewoods that had sprung up virtually overnight on the periphery of nearly every major American city, the great urbanist Lewis Mumford lamented the "multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless prefabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold." Our debate about suburbanization has largely been about mass culture and taste, isolation and conformity. Latter-day suburban critics like the acerbic James Howard Kunstler (*The Geography of Nowhere*) paint a dark picture of a pathological culture of hyper-consumerism that has crushed the small-town *Gemeinschaft* that once supposedly characterized the United States. In contrast, defenders of suburbia and exurbia, like David Brooks, seek to rescue suburbanites, their SUVs and their mega-grills from the condescension of urban, latte-sipping, blue-staters.

Kunstler and Brooks would be interesting footnotes to the culture wars of the

past two decades were it not for a large, well-funded, disciplined movement that has risen up to challenge suburban sprawl. Over the past decade a growing chorus of activists—a motley crew of wealthy suburbanites, urban community development activists, horse farmers, environmentalists, architects and critics—have denounced the mega shopping malls and big-box retailers that drain business from city centers; "McMansions" and vast seas of asphalt that have gobbled up wetlands and family farms; and the gas-addicted soccer moms and office-park dads who clog the roads. While many of these critics have a hard time concealing their disdain for bent-grass lawns and two-story foyers and three-car garages, their argument with suburbia is not primarily cultural. Instead, they contend that sprawl fragments government, maldistributes economic resources and ravages the environment. Armed with studies from the Brookings Institution, the Wharton School and even the US Geological Survey, they advocate "smart growth"—public policies that encourage public transportation, preserve environmentally fragile land and channel investment to older, denser urban centers.

A few dissident activists and intellectuals, mostly libertarian think-tankers and developer-sponsored lobbyists, have tried to defend unregulated, low-density suburban growth. Joining them is architectural historian Robert Bruegmann, whose *Sprawl: A Compact History* provides the most coherent and well-informed defense of sprawl to date. Bruegmann weaves an encyclopedic knowledge of urban planning history into a scathing polemic, lending his book an authority that is lacking in the pro-suburban tracts of writers like David Brooks, and an incisive political edge atypical of academic studies.

Peering out of airplane windows or walking along downtown city streets, Bruegmann is a natural *flâneur* who guides his readers through modern metropolises as diverse as Stockholm, Hamburg, Los Angeles, Portland, Houston and Chicago, with historical detours to ancient Rome, early modern Paris, and nineteenth-century London. Some of his findings are eye-opening. European cities, long appreciated for their urbanity and walkability, are rapidly suburbanizing (only a quarter of Parisians today actually live in central Paris). By contrast, in the past thirty years many American metropolitan areas have grown denser, even as they continue to decentralize. A quarter of the new housing starts in metropolitan Chicago are attached houses. Los Angeles—the epitome of sprawl—is now the densest urbanized area in the United

Thomas J. Sugrue, the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Professor of History and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, is the author of *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, just reissued as a Princeton Classic. He is finishing a history of the struggle for racial equality in the twentieth-century North for Random House.

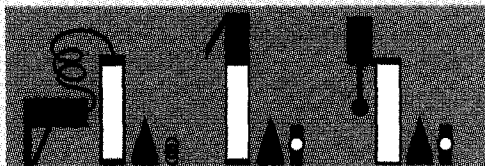
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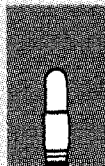
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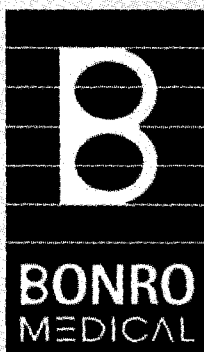
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States, with more than 7,000 people per square mile. In the prosperous countries of Europe and North America, at least, sprawl is the norm.

For Bruegmann, this is all to the good. In a libertarian mantra that he repeats throughout the book, sprawl is the outgrowth of the ostensibly universal human quest for “privacy, mobility, and choice.” After all, the ancient Romans built suburban villas in the hills of Tivoli and Frascati; bourgeois nineteenth-century Londoners fled to the Surrey countryside; and early twentieth-century New Yorkers overflowed into Brooklyn, Queens and beyond. Sprawl accelerated in the twentieth century, Bruegmann argues, because democracy and affluence allowed ordinary citizens to follow in the suburbanizing footsteps of the wealthy. Our galactic, decentralized metropolises are the result of “millions of individual choices.” To curb sprawl would be to snuff out democracy, limit personal choice and ultimately undo the greatest triumphs of modern life.

A market populist, Bruegmann spares no invective in challenging sprawl’s critics as a “small cultural elite” blinded by “aesthetic prejudices” and “obvious class bias.” Out of touch with middle America, sprawl’s critics would, if they had their way, replace suburbia with “an idealized vision of the European city of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.” Bruegmann singles out environmentalists for particular scorn, as heirs of “the hoary tradition of wanting to reform the lives of other people, particularly people who couldn’t be trusted to make the right decisions on their own.” To those who make “highly subjective” argu-

ments against increased automobile use, dependency on fossil fuel, longer commuting times and the loss of farmland, wetlands and forests, Bruegmann offers a whiggish rejoinder. Why complain? Environmental problems were worse fifty or 100 years ago—and the same affluence that has spurred sprawl has led to a cleaner environment. (What Bruegmann won’t acknowledge is that those meddling reformers he vilifies were largely responsible for sanitary and environmental regulations.) True, suburbs and exurbs today are not afflicted by the pall of coal soot that once darkened the skies of Pittsburgh or Cleveland or New York. Lawn fertilizer and automobile fluids running into creeks is nothing compared with the open sewers that ran through American city streets throughout most of the nineteenth century. But the “it used to be worse” comparison leads Bruegmann to dismiss mounting evidence of the long-term cumulative effects of suburban sprawl on global warming and species loss. Even relatively short increases in automobile travel time because of sprawl—when aggregated by the millions—mean more fuel burned and more air and water pollution. Alone, controls on suburban growth and better transportation planning won’t solve the problem of global warming. But car dependency surely makes it worse.

Bruegmann’s idealized portrait of suburban growth as an expression of democracy and choice obscures the most important criticism of sprawl, namely that it causes and perpetuates economic and racial inequalities. The rapid expansion of suburbia and exurbia has been fueled by the large-scale exodus of whites from central cities and, increasingly, from racially and ethnically diverse older suburbs. Racial inequality is not the only cause of sprawl. But it takes a peculiarly narrow vision of urban history to claim that it isn’t crucial. The result has been the growing concentration of poor people of color in central cities; the growth of entry-level jobs in places that are increasingly distant from poor neighborhoods; increased racial segregation in education; and, most important, because of the fragmentation of most metropolitan governments, a lack of political will to grapple with “urban” problems, like concentrated poverty, inferior schools and disinvestment. Sprawl is the geography of inequality.

What is most characteristic about sprawling suburbs today is how they rely on both public and private regulations to circumvent choice. In his deeply researched and well-written book *Bourgeois Nightmares*, MIT historian Robert Fogelson shows that American suburbs have assumed their sprawling form pre-

cisely because developers wanted to curb individual choice. In this dark genealogy of suburbia, Fogelson persuasively demonstrates that fear—not future-looking optimism—shaped the geography of metropolitan America. Through the mid-nineteenth century, wealthy and working-class people lived cheek by jowl in American cities. But by century’s end, middle-class and wealthy Americans grew increasingly fearful of their neighbors, especially immigrants and blacks. And they also grew fundamentally distrustful of one another. In America’s freewheeling capitalist society, property owners inevitably sought the “highest,” or most profitable, use for their property, regardless of its impact on their neighbors. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, developers began to impose “restrictive covenants” that controlled how a property could be developed, how it could be used and who could live there. By the 1920s, restrictions had become ubiquitous; by the 1930s, they were written into zoning laws; and they remain in full force throughout much of sprawl-land today.

The form that metropolitan areas took was not the result of the agglomeration of millions of individual choices: Rather, those choices were structured by a series of increasingly rigid regulations. Most important in shaping the social geography and the environment of suburbs were regulations that specified lot size and forbade multiple-family dwellings, and by so doing priced out poor and working-class purchasers. The detached suburban house, set back from the street and surrounded by large green yards, was not solely or primarily an expression of a cultural preference for green, open space. It was a device to exclude “undesirables” whose very presence threatened upwardly mobile suburbanites. Other restrictions further blocked access by low-income residents. In the early twentieth century, when most working-class people kept chickens and pigs as a matter of survival, suburban developers put restrictions on household animals, not just to keep out squealing pigs but their owners, too.

The most pernicious tactic that determined the patterns of suburbanization were racial and ethnic restrictions. Beginning in the 1920s, it was commonplace for developers to restrict the use or ownership of houses to “the Caucasian race.” Even after the Supreme Court’s 1948 ruling that restrictive covenants were unenforceable, prohibitions against “Africans, Negroes, and Ethiopians” (and sometimes Jews and Asians) remained in deeds and continued to shape real estate practices. Until the 1960s it was “unethical” for realtors to introduce “undesirable” groups into a neighborhood. Racial restrictions also shaped

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federal mortgage lending policies that forbade loans to racially mixed neighborhoods. Most important, they shaped the still-widespread belief that the presence of more than a few blacks in a neighborhood is irrefutable evidence of decline.

The exclusion of these "undesirables" has a long and sordid history, which James Loewen chronicles with zeal in *Sundown Towns*. Through oral histories, research in local libraries and the use of census data, Loewen has uncovered thousands of little-known "sundown towns," places throughout the United States that systematically excluded African-Americans. Loewen found evidence that at least 184 towns marked their borders with signs like one in Hawthorne, California, that read "Nigger Don't Let the Sun Set on YOU in Hawthorne." Loewen estimates that at least 3,000 towns "went sundown," most during the period between 1890 and 1968. Many of these towns had a small number of blacks in the 1880s or '90s but were all-white by 1930. A majority of sundown towns were in the North and West (Illinois alone had at least 456). Blacks knew well to avoid such places—and if they didn't, whites had all sorts of ways, from police harassment to mob violence, to remind them that they were not welcome. The singular contribution of Loewen's book is to show that white Northerners were every bit as effective in enforcing segregation as the Southern architects of Jim Crow.

Loewen hopes to jar white readers from their sense of racial innocence by uncovering a painful, neglected history of systematic racial exclusion. Most white Americans take for granted the homogeneity of their neighborhoods. Loewen offers the powerful rejoinder that the segregation of blacks and whites (and to a lesser extent other minority groups) was no accident. To make his case, he has compiled countless examples of racial incidents in small towns throughout the country. His approach is not graceful: He piles example upon example, overwhelming readers with grim accounts of racial violence, including riots, lynchings and what could be best described as pogroms against blacks, particularly during racially charged strikes or after black-on-white crimes. Especially forceful are his stories of the everyday harassment of Northern blacks by hotel and gas station owners, police officers, real estate agents—all of whom worked to keep towns all-white. While his chronicle of racial incidents can be numbing and repetitious, the cumulative impact is undeniable.

Loewen made his reputation by skewering inaccuracies in history textbooks—and here he accurately blames local historians for covering up the sordid racist histories

of their own towns. Still, those who are skeptical of Loewen's argument will find plenty of gaps in his research. His findings are often speculative (which, to his credit, Loewen candidly admits). Some of his most provocative assertions rest on tiny shards of evidence; in particular, he relies on oral histories and e-mails from residents of sundown towns, making it difficult to differentiate rumor from fact. In his most dubious historical argument—one that goes against the grain of the last generation of African-American historians, who have emphasized black agency—Loewen argues that the great migration of blacks to major

Northern cities was "driven by white opposition." While it is incontestable that some black migrants were refugees from racial violence, they had many good economic and cultural reasons to move to places like Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and New York. Moreover, by focusing so relentlessly on anti-black sentiment, he overlooks the fact that grassroots black activists—even during the early twentieth-century "nadir" of race relations—protested, litigated and resisted segregation throughout the North, even in sundown towns.

Some of Loewen's most compelling chapters explore "sundown suburbs." In

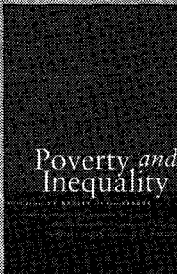
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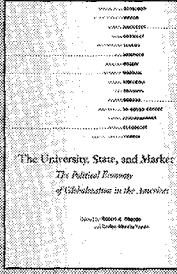
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an era of color-blind rhetoric, most whites explain away their lack of black neighbors as a matter of choice (they would rather live with their own kind) or income (they can't afford to live in suburbia). Loewen gives the lie to these arguments. He shows that by overwhelming majorities, blacks prefer racially mixed neighborhoods, almost all of them can afford housing in suburban areas and when they have gotten the chance they have often moved there. But in nearly every predominantly white suburb that has attracted more than a token number of blacks, the newcomers have been nearly universally greeted with white flight from neighborhoods and, especially, public schools.

Suburbs systematically excluded blacks using blunt tools. Orville Hubbard, the mayor of Dearborn, Michigan (the corporate headquarters of Ford Motor Company), from 1942 to 1978, successfully pledged to keep his city all-white, even though it was bounded by increasingly black sections of Detroit. The nearby Grosse Pointes, among Detroit's most exclusive suburbs, relied until 1960 on a rating system that measured, among other things, the "swarthy" of a potential home purchaser. Red-lining prevented blacks from getting mortgages, and real estate agents steered blacks to black neighborhoods, regardless of their preferences. Other suburbs justifiably earned a reputation for racial hostility that deterred many blacks from even considering living there.

Deerfield, the exemplar of postwar sprawl on Chicago's North Shore, followed exactly this route. Its developers took advantage of federally guaranteed mortgages. Its town government carefully crafted zoning laws that kept all but middle-class and wealthy home buyers out. And in 1959, when the Progress Development Corporation began construction on two small subdivisions of single-family detached houses that met Deerfield's zoning regulations, all hell broke loose. Local residents discovered that Progress planned a model racially integrated community. One of the town's residents, a partner in a leading Chicago law firm, worked to stop the development by any means necessary. The few Deerfielders who spoke on behalf of the development were heckled; one young lawyer lost his job for taking the "wrong" side in the debate. In a hastily called village referendum, held the weekend before Christmas, town voters overwhelmingly approved a plan to condemn the Progress subdivisions in favor of parkland, even though they had decisively rejected similar plans just a year earlier. Deerfield went sundown. In 2000 its population was just 0.3 percent black.

To a great extent in modern America, where you live determines your economic,

educational and political opportunities. But where you live, especially if you are black or working-class or poor, is a matter of constraint as much as choice. Exclusion by class and especially by race has—more than anything else—given modern American metropolitan areas their shape and their distinctive character. From a plane America's metropolitan landscapes seem

sprawling and amorphous and incomprehensible, but on the ground the patterns of race and class and inequality and exclusion are visible to all but the most obtuse. Take a stroll down any side street in Deerfield—as long as you leave by dusk—and then make your way to Chicago's West Side. Only fifteen or twenty miles separate the two places, but they are worlds apart. ■

FILMS

A Touch of Evil

STUART KLAWANS

**THE THREE BURIALS OF MELQUIADES ESTRADA •
BATTLE IN HEAVEN • BLOSSOMS OF FIRE • THE FALLEN IDOL**

For the bored and brutalized wife of a Border Patrol officer, the name Cincinnati can ring with the magic of Xanadu. Like most of the characters in *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, young Lou Ann (January Jones) dreams of a better place; and like most of the women in this contemporary western, she defines that "better" on the basis of hard experience. Cincinnati may not be great, but it's all lights and whoopee compared with her present home in Cibolo County, Texas, in a trailer next to the railroad tracks, in a town too minute to have its own mall.

Other characters in the movie, men mostly, see the mirage of happiness up ahead. People such as Melquiades (Julio Cesar Cedillo) stream north across the border, imagining a brighter life in the United States. Pete (Tommy Lee Jones), Melquiades's cattle-ranch foreman and friend, travels south instead, to carry out a duty and exact revenge but also, as you gradually understand, to search for a Mexican Eden.

Only Lou Ann's skull-faced husband, Mike (Barry Pepper), seems to lack such dreams of a better place, having found as much of an ideal as he needs within the pages of *Hustler*. A dangerous ideal: In one of screen history's most elaborate demonstrations of the evils of whacking off, Mike is literally caught with his pants down, right out in the Texas sunshine, and so in his embarrassment and panic shoots to death the blameless Melquiades. For this crime against one of the immigrants he has so enthusiastically hounded—and for this sin against his wife—Mike undergoes a long and saddle-sore penance. He becomes, against his will, a traveling companion to Pete and the increasingly unattractive Melquiades, who must be given the sweet and decent burial he deserves, back home.

As this plot unfolds, you will notice how the emotional atmosphere of the border, its terrain, even its geographic location seem to change, depending on which movie *The Three Burials* wants to be at the moment. You watch, by turns, a protest film directed against several species of injustice; a documentary about the penury of small-town life in the Southwest; a vigilante thriller starring a guy who looks like Warren Oates overgrown with moss; a travelogue featuring scenic mountains and desert; a quest film with elements grotesque and macabre; a melancholy love story of men chasing fantasy women, and of real women wearily distancing themselves from men. The plan for putting all this together—a necessarily tricky scheme, involving ostentatiously scrambled chronology and coy narrative gaps—came from screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga (*Amores Perros*, *21 Grams*), whose work very plausibly won a prize last year at Cannes. The job of realizing this script, bringing out both its cleverness and its heart, fell to Tommy Lee Jones, who chose a challenge for his first feature directing job and handled it much as he acts, with brisk authority.

Though not as brisk as, say, Clint Eastwood. Compared with Eastwood, who wants to look as if he just stepped up and said the line, Jones the actor is practically a star of the Yiddish theater, always playing to the audience with his odd-paced delivery and chest-thrusting gait. In *The Three Burials*, Jones the director has imposed no

strong discipline on this style. He lets himself pause soulfully in the stirrup while dismounting a horse, or aggressively rush his speech in a confrontation, or pat Lou Ann's head in a gesture that's both kind and indelibly creepy (considering that she's bound and gagged). What the director grants to himself, though, he also gives the rest of the cast, to the point of letting Barry Pepper become the pivotal figure of the movie.

In contrast to Cedillo, who is consistently warm and ingenuous as Melquiades, or January Jones, who pretty much broods and fumes her way through the film, Pepper gets to change, and in a big way. His border cop may start as a perfect villain—the scowl of a lean Roman centurion, the posture of an American white man spoiling for a fight—but Pepper is soon running through defiance, fear, confusion, physical pain and numb resignation to conclude with remorse, on a scale large enough to require spit and snot with the tears. He holds the camera at the final shot; he speaks the film's last words. The director has done him justice.

And that, even more than the search for fabled Cincinnati, is what *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* is about: doing justice. A common theme for a western. You rarely see it carried out so fully, though—and almost never on behalf of a title character who so little expected it.

Carlos Reygadas's *Battle in Heaven* takes place in a Mexico City of religious processions and flag-raising ceremonies, proliferating highways and improvised market stalls, where the insolent rich literally piss on their servants and the poor ride the subway wearing Aztec Wrestler masks. In explaining why he incorporated such motifs, Reygadas has cited Alfred Hitchcock, who advised that a film set in Holland had better show tulips and windmills. Respect must be paid to convention—all the more so in a film lovingly shot on location, cast with nonprofessional actors who engage in real sex.

The sex bit, even more than the outrageousness of the plot, has raised some clamor against *Battle in Heaven*. Heavy-breasted, myopic, middle-aged Marcos Hernández—a chauffeur in real life—plays the role of a military chauffeur named Marcos, one of whose tasks is to drive around his general's wealthy and stylish daughter Ana (played by Anapola Mushkadiz, who in real life is wealthy and stylish). To make sure he's got your attention, Reygadas begins *Battle in Heaven* with Ana naked on her knees before an equally bare and sweating Marcos. Two perfect tears form in Ana's still-juvenile eyes, as she performs a nonsimulated act in close-up. Marcos,

meanwhile, stares ahead with the strained, wooden expression he will wear for most of the movie. You can, of course, watch this scene as a tribute to Warhol's *Blow Job*, following an association that Reygadas all but forces on you. Or you can think about tulips and windmills. Either way, Reygadas is asserting the movieness of the moment and aggressively breaking through it, as he will also do later in a scene of lovemaking between Marcos and his rotund, impassive wife (Bertha Ruiz, who in life as in the movie sells jellies in a subway station).

Reygadas's story, like his sex scenes, merges the materialistic with the fanciful. Throughout the movie, Marcos and his wife bear the guilt of having kidnapped an infant, who died before they could collect the ransom. Since Reygadas refrains from showing either the abduction or the death, and since kidnappers are known to strike frequently in Mexico, there's nothing particularly lurid about this setup. But Reygadas further posits that Ana, like the protagonist of *Belle de Jour*, works in a brothel; that Marcos has the privilege of knowing this secret, and impulsively shares his own secret with her; and that this confidence somehow moves Ana to grant his dream and let him enter her bed. We are now deep into the territory of the unlikely—which Reygadas then denies by venturing on long, nonnarrative forays through the city.

Battle in Heaven takes its dollop of Hitchcock, some Warhol and a lot of Buñuel and mixes them with a large dose of Bresson, posing awkward "models" in tableaux of crime, repentance and maybe redemption. Reygadas steals from the best; but what he steals, he changes into his own. I have warned you about everything—well, almost everything—that you might find exploitative or false. But once Reygadas draws you in to the visionary intensity of *Battle in Heaven*, no warning can shield you.

In Oaxaca, Mexico, in the isthmus city of Juchitán, lives a vibrant community of Zapotec Indians whose forceful, colorful women have won the admiration of visitors going back to Frida Kahlo and Sergei Eisenstein. Among the more recent of these outsiders was British journalist Jocasta Shakespeare, who in 1994 wrote an article for *Elle* that characterized Juchitán as a matriarchal city bossed by "huge and sensual women," hard-drinking, money-loving and "red-hot."

By the time this article was published, to general outrage in the town, American documentarians Maureen Gosling and Ellen Osborne had begun a film about Juchitán and its women. In the face of the Zapotecas' anger, this project turned

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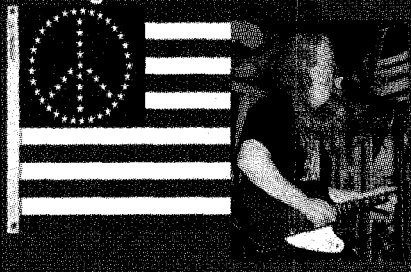
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into a kind of correction to the *Elle* story. And yet Gosling had been attracted to Juchitán precisely because of its reputation as a matriarchy, where women are known to dominate the cash economy and homosexuality is said to be accepted as a normal part of life. Debunking what she had come to celebrate, celebrating what she'd debunked, Gosling eventually pulled together *Blossoms of Fire*, after a ten-year struggle. Following many festival screenings, the picture now goes into release through New Yorker Films.

Given the film's contradictions, perhaps the most impressive thing about *Blossoms of Fire* is the smoothness with which it unfolds. Gosling is, among much else, a veteran film editor, whose magical touch with transitions is sorely needed, as she moves from economic issues to party politics to gay and lesbian themes to the struggle to preserve the Zapotec language. Her principal aids in this editing are the local songs and the figures of the women themselves, with their brilliantly colored skirts dancing about them. When Gosling interrupts to provide a singsong narration, her voice drains the life out of the scene; but there's so much vitality to be found wherever she turns the camera that *Blossoms of Fire* always recovers.

As for the reputation that drew Gosling to Juchitán: Matriarchy, in this case, means that women can work twelve hours in the market and then clean house. Acceptance of sexual difference means that parents didn't actually carry out the beatings that their lesbian and gay children had feared. I say you make your own utopia.

Right after World War II, Carol Reed directed a trio of exceptional thrillers: a dark journey through Belfast with a doomed IRA gunman (*Odd Man Out*); a tricky mystery about postwar profiteering in Vienna (*The Third Man*); and the lightest of the three, *The Fallen Idol*, which is set in London but also on foreign soil, since its main location is an embassy. Written by Graham Greene, based on his story "The Basement Room," *The Fallen Idol* views adult miseries and betrayals through the eyes of a child and English habits through the eyes of an alien—the same eyes, belonging to the ambassador's son (Bobby Henrey), whose only friends are a pet snake and the embassy's butler (Ralph Richardson, in perhaps his finest screen performance). Rialto Pictures has struck a fresh print of *The Fallen Idol* and is putting it into theaters, starting with a run at New York's Film Forum (through February 23). You won't find anything else half as entertaining. ■

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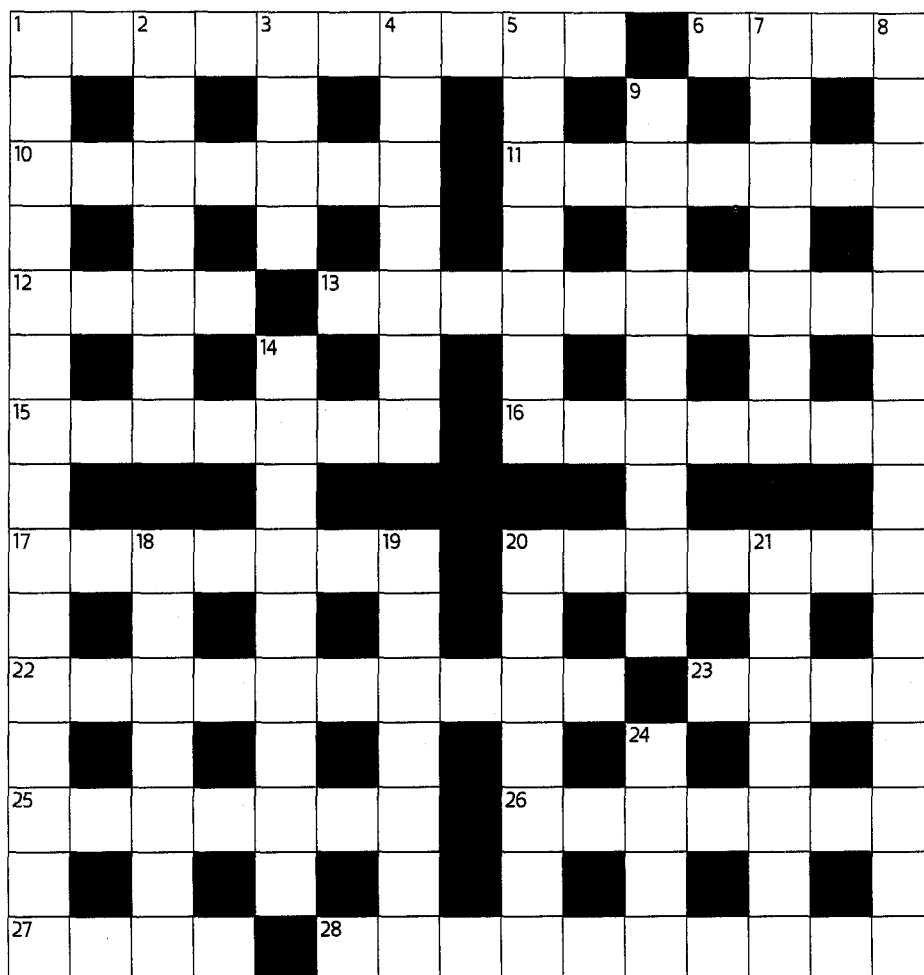
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ACROSS

- 1 and 6 Seems like a helluva dessert—dessert starting with bad things of returning uniform color. (6,4,4)
- 10 Is treason so wrong for a lawmaker? (7)
- 11 On the way to showing our teen misbehavior? (2,5)
- 12 Painters might work in them, possibly in the silo. (4)
- 13 The way I exist as a low voice on the rocky road to reach one of our overseas representatives? (10)
- 15 A young man with quite a racket who was associated with primitive lighting. (7)
- 16 Somewhat of a storm down under, which isn't quite fair. (3,4)
- 17 The way one gets a body up? (7)
- 20 Curse it! That's what you do in an old-fashioned way, as the tamer said to one he finally took home! (7)
- 22 It's a pattern of what you might have for breakfast and throw in the pub. (3,3,4)
- 23 Go back to the French, if you want to see how to look rudely at the gal! (4)
- 25 A cookie to a Brit, but morning fare for a Yank. (7)
- 26 Take advantage of something, but by the sound of it you get it back with falsehoods. (7)
- 27 and 28 Lily-livered, with far from strong benders. (4,2,3,5)

DOWN

- 1 Couldn't you find the joint if you had one? (10,5)
- 2 Proving a moving vehicle is sick on a bean. (7)
- 3 The old instrument carried away by the burglar, as one hears. (4)
- 4 Who's in charge of the job, being right in the enemy! (7)
- 5 In toto, it's only one of those things you wear to work. (4,3)



- 7 An English castle with a little stream directed upwards. (7)
- 8 Do they remove something supercilious? (7,8)
- 9 A bit huffy over the owl's attribute, which goes against the grain. (9)
- 14 Common woman in here? Quite the opposite—a way of eliminating players from the game. (3,3,3)
- 18 The ocean has a swell content, if such—though the plural form was where the pirates hung out. (4,3)
- 19 Between the Elbe and the Oder, possibly used with 10. (7)
- 20 Brooklyn, for example, alternatively in one branch of it. (7)
- 21 Describing the old tunes as being just an old tatter when it comes up to me. (7)
- 24 Choose your own mining equipment! (4)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3022

M	E	L	O	D	I	C	S	C	U	T	T	L	E
O	E	A	H	I	N	R	M						
B	L	A	C	K	A	N	D	W	H	I	T	E	
C	R	O	P	E	I	A	R						
A	G	N	A	T	E	L	A	N	G	L	E	S	
P			A	S	T	O	U	N	D		O		
S	I	T	S	T	O	T	L	A	I	N			
	H		B	U	C	K	R	A	M	N			
I	T	E	M		A	I	R	I	D	L	E		
M			T	R	I	N	K	E	T			M	
P	A	R	L	A	Y	G	S	U	P	E	R	B	
A	O	N	D	S		R	R	A					
S	A	P	I	D	O	W	L	N	O	R	M	S	
S	E	E	N	I	E	O	S						
E	A	S	T	M	A	N	P	O	R	T	R	A	Y

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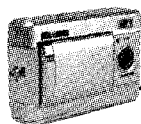
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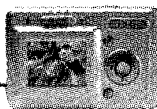
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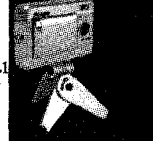
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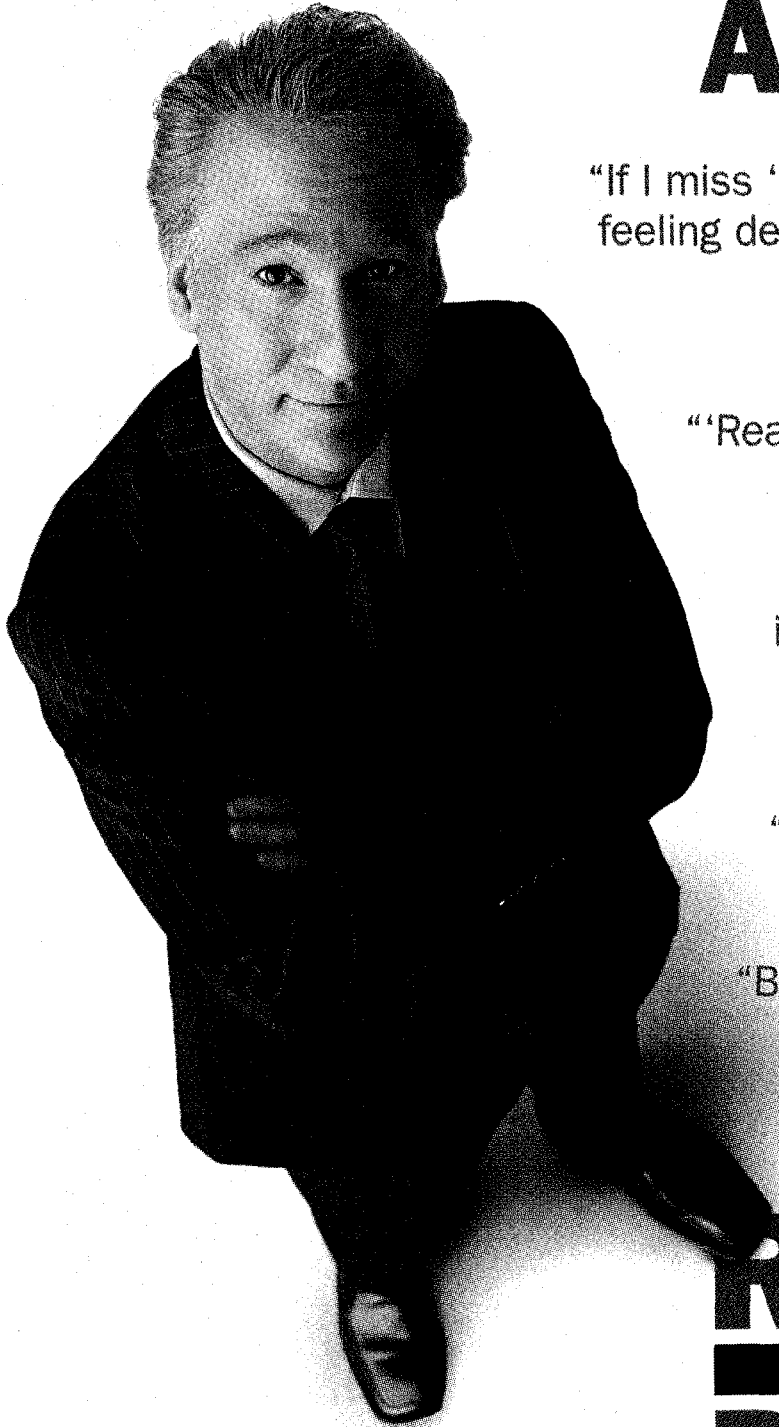
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